

CONSOLATION

I N

LIFE and DEATH,

Wherein is shewed,

That Interest in Christ, is a ground of Comfort
under all the Troubles of Life, and Terrors
of death. How they that have an Interest
in Christ, may retain the same!

Begun in

A Funeral Sermon, occasioned by the death of
Mrs. *Ellen Asty*, and since much enlarged.

By *Owen Stockton*, late Minister of the Go-
spel at *Colchester* in *Essex*.

TOGETHER

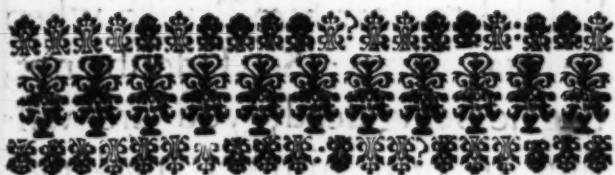
With the Life of the said Mrs. *Ellen Asty*,

Rom. 8. v. 38, 39. *For I am perswaded that
neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor
Principalities, nor Powers, nor things pre-
sent, nor things to come. v. 39. Nor height,
nor depth, nor any other Creature shall be able
to separate us from the love of God, which is
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

London, Printed by J. R. for *Tho. Parkhurst*,
at the Bible and three Crowns, at the lower
end of *Cheapside*. 1681.

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Bandar & China May 1, 1937 in 2nd & 10 (1937)



To the Worthily Honour-
red *John Clark*, of *Bury*
in *Suffolk*, *Esquire*.

S I R,

IT is your seriousness in Reli-
gion, together with your
intimate Acquaintance with, and
respect for, Reverend Mr. *Owen*
Stockton, that occasioneth the pre-
fixing your name to the ensuing
Treatise, of which he was the
Author. He was one, mighty
in the Scriptures, whose Life was
much desired, and his Death
much lamented. As you de-

A lighted

The Epistle Dedicatory.

lighted to hear him Preach when he was alive ; So I doubt not, but he being dead, you are willing to hear him yet speaking ; especially in a word of Consolation against the troubles of Life, and the fears and terrours of Death.

I hope the Lord hath delivered your self from the Sting of Death, but yet you may need some help against the fear of it. Take a survey of your Mercy, that you are not under the unhappiness of Christless Souls, who, through the fear of Death, are all their life time subject to Bondage.

It is said, that the *Indians* being alarum'd with the Approaches of Death by its Arrestment, so as all
hope

The Epistle Dedicatory.

hope of recovery is past, then to behold and hear their throbbing sobs, and deep-fetched sighs, their grief-wrung hands, and tear-bedewed cheeks, their doleful cries, would draw tears from Adamantine Eyes, that be but Spectators of their mournful Obsequies.

Indeed it is unexpressibly sad, to be under a Conviction (as many are) of the immortality of a never dying Soul, and yet to be Strangers to the promise of Eternal Life. Such must needs be Mourners without hope.

All the Cordials in the World in this case, will not afford the least drop of refreshment to such disconsolate Souls: nor will a Righteousness of our own be a
sure

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sure bottom for Comfort against that last Enemy Death.

✓ But behold, here is a way deciphered, whereby we may not only be helped to leave Riches, Friends, Wife, Children, Houses, Lands, and depart in peace, but also with exceeding joy. [*Interest in Christ*] will be a means to turn Death the King of Terrors into the King of Comforts; it will make it of a bitter Enemy, a familiar Friend, an Out-let to Affliction, and a Portal to Glory.

How that [*Interest*] conduceth to the fitting a Soul with Consolation, is discovered here, by this eminent Servant, and Minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. Owen Stockton, in a Funeral Sermon upon the Death of Mrs. Ellen Asty, (the Relict

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Relict of that Reverend Mr. *Asty*, late of *Stratford in Suffolk*) which afterwards he much enlarged, and so left it under his own hand. It was intended that the said Mr. *Stockton* should have printed it together with her Life; but Death arresting him, before he had Accomplished that work; Providence hath cast it upon my hands to draw her Portraiture out of the papers which were in his hands to that end; which I have done accordingly, and here present it to your self, and to publick view. I must say further, that this is a Branch, or part of a Treatise of his, on the same Text, entituled [*the best Interest*], which probably will follow speedily. This, and that together, compleat the Subject, yet

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yet either of them might have appeared to the Reader, as a perfect and distinct Treatise, had I not hinted thus much.

I shall only add, that my ardent desire is, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may bless you with all Spiritual Blessings in Heavenly places in Christ, so prayeth,

September 1. 1681.

Honoured Sir,
Your Servant in the Gospel,
Sam. Petto.

Errata.

P Age 3. l. 25. *dele for.* p. 23. l. 26. *r. there are.* p. 29. l. 12. *r. grace.* p. 37. l. 29. *dele should.* p. 42. l. 16. *for ready r. really.* p. 44. l. 3. *for upon r. yea.* p. 59. l. 10. *for fight r. fight.* p. 60. l. 28. *r. carried on.* p. 70. l. 13. *r. trusting.* p. 88. l. 13 *for here r. how.* p. 96. l. 17. *for preserving r. preferring.*

In Mrs. Astys Life,

Page 8. l. 26. *dele never.* p. 9. l. 15. *r. uprightness.* p. 10. l. 16. *r. never seemed.*

CON-



CONSOLATION IN LIFE and DEATH.

Cant. 2. 16.

*My Beloved is mine, and I am his, he
feedeth among the Lilies.*

THis Book containeth a Discourse concerning Jesus Christ, and his Church. Sometimes Christ is brought in speaking of his Church, and sometimes, to his Church. And at other times the Church is brought in speaking of Christ, and sometimes to Christ.

In this Text the Spouse of Christ is brought in speaking concerning Christ, and expressing her grounds of Consolation, that she had, both under the troubles of Life, and the danger of Death. The troubles of the Church are set out.

Chap. 1. 6. *She was black, because the Sun had*

B

looked

looked upon her, which signifieth the scorching persecutions; that the Lord suffereth to come upon the Church, to try the Faith and Patience of his Servants. And she met with much anger and hard usage from her Mothers Children, that is, those that professed the same Faith with her self, *my Mothers Children were angry with me*, and made me the Keepers of their Vineyards, and would not suffer her to keep her own Vineyard. Her troubles are further set out. *Chap. 2. v. 2. As a Lilie among Thorns, so is my Love among the Daughters*, that is, compassed about on every side with sharp and sore troubles, that did prick, and grieve, like Thorns, or that her lot and habitation was in the midst of evil Men, who were like Thorns in her side. Her inward troubles are touched on, which did proceed from her abundant love to Christ : *v. 5. I am sick of love*. Sicknes makes a man restless, such was her condition, a restless condition.

Her troubles are also set out, *v. 15*. There were Foxes abroad, that made spoil of the Vines. And these Foxes were of two sorts.

1. False Teachers, that did by false Doctrine corrupt and spoil the Vines. *Ezek. 13. 4. Israel, thy Prophets are like the Foxes*, that is, the false Prophets; for the true Prophets support and cherish the Vines, they are the false Prophets, that spoil the Vines.

2, Subtle and cruel Persecutors, that seek after the lives of the Saints, are these Foxes, *Luk. 13. 31, 32.*

Seet. 1.

Sett. 1. The Division of the Words with the Doctrines.

In the words we have

1. The Title given to Christ [*my Beloved*] or as the *Dutch*, *my best Beloved*, or as one *unicè dilectus*, my only Beloved. Whatever apprehensions other men may have of Christ, though they see no beauty, or comeliness, why they should desire him, though he be to them a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, though they make light of him, and reject him; yet gracious Souls love Christ, yea, he is their best Beloved; they love him above all things and persons in the World.

2. VVe have the claim that is laid to Christ, *My Beloved is mine*. I have a special and peculiar interest in him, he is mine, as much as any thing, that I have, is mine, *my Beloved is mine*, I can, I do, I will lay claim to him, as my own, *Psal. 67. 6. God, even our own God shall bless us.*

3. The Confidence the Spouse had of her special and peculiar interest in Christ. It is not, *I hope he is mine*, or by way of desire, *O that he were mine*, but it is spoken with much confidence, *my Beloved is mine. Isaiab 63. 16. Doubtless thou art our Father.*

4. Here is Christs Interest in his Church, *I am his*. I am not, I will not be mine own, but *I am his*. I am not the Worlds, but he hath chosen and called me out of the world, *I am his.*

5. Christs familiar converse with his Church, *he feedeth among the Lilies*, that is, he affordeth his presence to them, he converseth familiarly with them, as persons do that feed together.

6. The persons among whom Christ feeds, they that are his, those that love him, those that resemble the *Lilies*, that is, humble Souls, such as walk innocently, such as are fruitful. It's *Plinys* Observation, *Lilio nihil facundius*, such as are like Christ, the lillie of the Valleys, meek and lowly in heart.

7. The Consolation the Church hath under all the troubles of this Life, and the fears of Death, and that ariseth from two Heads.

1. Her interest in Christ, *my Beloved is mine*.

2. The enjoyment of Christs presence, *he feedeth among the Lilies*. Feeding implyeth

1. His presence and familiar converse with her.

2. His delight in her, feeding signifieth delight, John 4. 34. *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me*.

3. His ministring inward and spiritual Comforts. Judg. 19. 5. *Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread*. And inward supports. Psal. 104. 15. *Bread which strengthneth mans heart*.

Observe. 1. Jesus Christ and Gracious Souls have a mutual interest, each in other, Christ is theirs, and they are his.

2. Such

In Life and Death.

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2. Such as believe in Christ may come to a sure and certain Knowledge of their Interest in Christ, they may be able to say with much confidence, Christ is mine, and I am his.
3. Every true Believer hath a great love to Jesus Christ, yea he loveth Christ above all things and persons in the whole world. My beloved, or as some render it, my best beloved.
4. It is the work and office of Faith, to appropriate, and apply Christ to a mans own Soul. My beloved is mine.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ feedeth among the Lilies, that is, converseth with them, delighteth in them, Communicates Spiritual comforts and supports to them.
6. It is a great comfort to the Saints in an evil day, when they are as a Lillie among Thorns, that Christ feedeth among the Lilies.

The Observation insisted on is.

Doct. Interest in Christ is a ground of strong Consolation under all the troubles of this life, and the dangers and approaches of Death.

When it was a time of persecution, and there were Thorns on every side, and the Foxes spoyling the Vines, the Spouse could triumph in this, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his, Luk. 1. 47.* The Virgin Mary went through

through sore afflictions as sharp, as if she had a *Sword run through her*. *Luk. 2. 35.* yet her Spirit could rejoyce in God her Saviour. *Paul* when shut up in Prison, could, and did rejoyce in Christ Jesus, *Phil. 1. 13.* compared with *Phil. 3. 3. We rejoyce in Christ Jesus.* *Cant. 8. 5.* The Wilderness, a place of great troubles, and a land of the shadow of Death, that is, where they walked almost continually in danger of death. *Jer. 2. 6.* yet under all the troubles of the wilderness, and the shadow of death, there was refreshment by leaning on Christ. *2 Sam. 30. 6.* David was in great distress, that he wept till he could weep no more, and was in danger of death, yet he could *encourage himself in the Lord his God.* *Cant. 2. 2. 3.* As a Lillie among Thorns, yet there, *I sat down under his shadow with great delight.* *Psal. 23. 1. 4.* *The Lord is my Shepherd,* and what then? *though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil.*

Sect. 2. VVhat is meant by an Interest in Christ? How Christ becomes ours, how we become Christs.

For the farther clearing hereof, that an Interest in Christ is a ground of strong Consolation under all the troubles of this life, and against the Fears and Terrors of Death, it will be expedient to enquire, what is meant by an Interest in Christ. And how Christ becomes ours,

ours, and how we become his. To that end we may take notice of a three fold Interest in Christ.

1. A general Interest which is common to all men, the evil, as well as the good, an interest by virtue of Creation, and of Christs being Lord of all. The, Son as well as the Father, was the Creatour of Mankind, and all other creatures. *Joh. 1. 3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was.* And not only by Creation hath Christ a right to all Mankind, but as Mediatour he is Lord of all, and is made Judge of the quick and dead, and hath power over all flesh. *Act. 10. 36. Preaching Peace by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all, Joh. 3. 35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. Joh. 17. 2. Thou hast given him power over all flesh.* This general interest in part, as his creatures, or as subjects of his Mediatory Kingdom, is not that interest, which is a ground of Consolation. For he ruleth by his power in the midst of his Enemies. *Psal. 110. 2. Rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies.*

2. There is a Titular Interest in Christ, when men profess themselves to be Christs, and profess, and say that Christ is theirs, but they are not his, neither is he theirs in truth. *Joh. 1. 11. He came to his own, and his own received him not.* The Jews are called Christs own, because they professed themselves to be

the people of God, but many of them were not his people. *Joh. 8. 54, 55. Ye say that he is your God, yet ye have not known him* Many lay claim to God as their God, and to Christ as their Saviour, that have no real interest in God and Christ.

3. There is a special saving interest in Christ as our Redeemer, which is, when a man is made a partaker of Christ, united to Christ, and hath a real and actual right to all the saving benefits of Christ. *Heb. 3. 14. We are made partakers of Christ.* They that are thus interested in Christ, are said to be in Christ, and by vertue of their Union with him, they have a right to all his saving benefits. *1 Cor. 1. 30. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption.* To be thus interested in Christ is not common to all men, but it is a special priviledge belonging to a peculiar people. *Tit. 2. 14. who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people.* As concerning this saving interest in Christ, we find some men are Christ's, owned by him for his own. *1 Cor. 3. 23. ye are Christs; Joh. 13. 1. Jesus having loved his own, loved them unto the end.* Some men are none of Christs, *Rom. 8. 9. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; but are without any part or portion in Christ. Eph. 2. 12. At that time ye were without Christ,* some men have a part with

with Christ, some have no part at all in him or with him, *Joh. 13. 8. If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me.* To open the nature of this saving Interest in Christ more fully, I shall resolve these two questions. 1. How Christ becometh ours. 2. How we become his.

How doth Christ become ours.

A. 1. By the Fathers giving him to be a propitiation for our sins, and Christs giving himself to die for our sins, God the Father gave Christ to be the propitiation for our sins. *Joh. 16. 8. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, 1 Joh. 4. 10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And as God gave Christ, so Christ gave himself to be a Sacrifice and ransom for us. There was his own consent to this Gift, the giving himself to die for our sins. Gal. 2. 20. Who loved me, and gave himself for me. Tit. 2. 14. Who gave himself for us — 1 Tim. 2. 6. Who gave himself for a ransom for all.*

2. Christ becomes ours by effectual calling, for when God calls us effectually, he calls us to fellowship with Christ, that is, to be partakers of Christ, and all his saving benefits. *1 Cor. 1. 9. God is faithful by whom ye were called to the Fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* When Christ dyed, he gave himself

self for us, when we are effectually called, he giveth himself to us. By the death of Christ there was an impetration or purchase of all things, that were necessary to our Salvation. In our effectual calling there is an application of Christ, and all the benefits purchased by Christ to our own Souls. As soon as we are effectually called, Christ becomes ours, and all his benefits become ours, we have an actual right to an interest and propriety in Christ, and in all his saving benefits. 1 Cor. 1. 26. *Ye see your calling, brethren—All are yours, and ye are Christs.* 1 Cor. 3. 22. 23. They that are effectually called, Christ is theirs, and all the benefits of Christ are theirs. I add this word *effectual*, because many are outwardly called by the Gospel, who are not inwardly and effectually called to Fellowship with Christ, now this effectual calling whereby we are made partakers of Christ, and his saving benefits, consists of these three Branches.

1. Illumination, when God calls us effectually, he brings us out of our ignorance and darkness, and gives us the knowledge of himself and his Son Jesus Christ. 1 Pet. 2. 9. *Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* The knowledge of Christ, and God in Christ, is a great furtherance of our being partakers of Christ, and his saving benefits, for through the knowledge of Christ are communicated to us, all things pertaining to Life and Godliness. 2 Pet. 1. 3. *According as his*
divine

divine power hath given us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and vertue.

2. The loosening and taking off the heart from all things that hinder the Soul from coming to and following after Jesus Christ. A man is called off from all that hinders his closing with Christ, whether they be worldly lusts, or fleshly lusts, or relying upon our own Righteousness, or any other impediments. A man is made to leave all to enjoy Christ; when Christ called *Levi*, he left all for to go after Christ. *Luk. 5. 27, 28.* He said unto him follow me; and he left all, rose up, and followed him. When Christ called *James* and *John*, they left their Father, their Servants, their Ship and there Nets and all to follow Christ. *Mark 1. 20.* He called them, and they left their Father *Zebedee* in the Ship with the hired Servants, and went after him. When the Lord had called the Apostle *Paul*, he was willing to suffer the loss of all things that came in competition with Christ, so that he might win Christ; *Phil. 3. 8.* Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.

3. When God calls a man effectually, he calls him to believe in Christ; he calls him to come to Christ, and to accept of Christ as offered in the Gospel, and to rely upon him alone

lone for his Salvation. *Joh. 6. 45. Every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* The Father calls us to come to his Son; and every one that heareth this call effectually cometh to Jesus Christ. Now they that are thus called to the knowledge and faith of Christ are made partakers of Christ and all his saving benefits, for by Faith Christ dwells in our hearts. *Eph. 3. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith.* And they that are thus called, shall have remission of sins, and eternal life. *Rom. 8. 30. Whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

3. Christ becometh ours by our receiving him. The Spirit of God maketh a free offer of Christ to every one that is willing to have him; *Rev. 22. 17. The Spirit saith come — And let him that is a thirst come; And whoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely.* VVhen we receive Jesus Christ thus offered to us he becometh ours, and we become his, *Joh. 1. 12. To as many as recieved him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* VVhen we receive Christ, he becomes our Saviour, and God becomes our Father, and we become his Sons. Now this receiving Christ implyeth these 3 things.

(1.) Our receiving that Testimony which is given of Christ in the Gospel concerning the per-

person, offices, death, and sufferings of Christ, and the benefits that we have thereby. As namely, that Jesus of *Nazareth* was God manifest in the Flesh, the Son of God, as well as the Son of man, that he is that Saviour that was foretold and promised should come into the World to save lost man, that he dyed for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us; that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, and exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, &c. Now then we receive his Testimony, when we believe the truth of those things which are revealed in the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, *Joh. 3. 33. He that hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal, that he is true.* Thus we receive Christ, when we believe the Doctrine of the Gospel, and continue therein. And this is necessary to our enjoying an Interest in Christ. *2 Joh. 9. He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father, and the Son.*

(2.) We receive Jesus Christ by the consent of our Wills. When our Wills consent to take this Jesus for our Lord and Saviour, as he is offered to us in the Gospel, and we are willing to be ruled by him, and to be saved by him in his own way. *Rev. 22. 17. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* The great work is to persuade and bring over the will

will to Christ, to make a man willing to have Christ for his Lord and Saviour, and to be willing to be saved by him in Life and Death in his own way. The averfeness of the will, to accept of Christ for our Lord and Saviour, we may see from such Scriptures as these. *Pf. 81. 11. Israel would none of me. Luk. 19. 14. We will not have this man reign over us. Job. 5. 40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.* It is the work of God, yea the power of God, that is required to make a man willing to have Christ for his Lord and Saviour, *Phil. 2. 13. It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. Pf. 110. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* When our wills consent to take Christ as he offers himself to us, he becomes ours. As the consenting to the enticeing of Sinners, makes us one with them, and makes us partakers of their evil deeds. *Pf. 51. 18. 2 John ver. 11.* And therefore *Solomon* adviseth, *Pro. 1. 10. My Son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* So by our consenting to receive Christ, when he offers himself to us, and wooeth, and intreateth us to accept him, we become one with, and are made partakers of his benefits. As 'tis in Marriage, it is not wooing and waiting, but consenting that makes up the Match. So it is in the mystical Marriage, it is not inviting and calling, and waiting, but consenting makes up the Match.

3. We

3. We receive Christ for our Saviour, when we rely upon him, and trust in him for Salvation, and all things requisite unto Salvation. When we look upon him as the only Saviour, and as an all-sufficient Saviour, and do trust in him for our eternal Salvation. *Eph. 1. 13. In whom ye trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. Ps. 86. 2. O thou my God, save thy Servant that trusteth in thee.*

The Lord was displeased with the *Israelites*, when they did not trust in his Salvation. *Psal. 78. 21, 22. The Lord was wroth, because they believed not in God, nor trusted in his Salvation.* In these three things consisteth this duty of receiving Christ.

1. In the assent of the mind, to the truth of those things that are revealed concerning Christ in the Gospel.

2. In the consent of the will to take this Jesus for our Lord and Saviour.

3. In the reliance or trust of the heart on Christ for Salvation.

4. Christ becometh ours, by our entering into Covenant with God. When upon the call of the Gospel we come to Christ, and believe in Christ, then we enter into Covenant with God, then God makes an everlasting Covenant with us. *Isa. 55. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear, and your souls shall live, and I will make an Everlasting Covenant with you,*

you, even the sure Mercies of David. And when the Lord takes us into his Covenant, then Jesus Christ becometh ours, and all his saving benefits become ours. For one main branch of the covenant is to give us Christ and all his saving benefits. *Isa. 42. 6. I will give thee for a Covenant of the people; for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, and to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison.* The great promise of the new covenant is, *I will be your God. Ezek. 36. 28.* And when the Lord promiseth to be our God, in that promise God the Father engageth himself to be our Father, and God the Son engageth to be our Saviour and our Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost engageth to be our comforter.

How do we become Christs.

I. By the donation of the Father. God the Father chose out of the children of men whom he saw good, and gave them to Jesus Christ to be his peculiar people, to be redeemed and saved by him. *Joh. 17. 6. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people.* All that God chose to eternal life, he gave to Christ to redeem them. So that all that are Christs are the Fathers, and all that are the Fathers by election, are the Sons by redemption. *Joh. 17. 10. All mine are thine, and thine are mine.*

II. We are Christs by Redemption; He bought us with a price, he purchased us with his own blood, he bought us Body and Soul for

for himself with a great price. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorifie God in your body and in your Spirits which are Gods.* The price that Christ gave for this purchase, was his own blood; Act. 20. 28. *To feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

III. We become Christs by the Spirits causing and enabling us to give our selves to Christ, We become Christs by a voluntary resignation of our own selves unto him. 2 Cor. 8. 5. *First gave their own selves unto the Lord.* Isa. 44. 5. *One shall say I am the Lord, and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord.* That is, shall surely and firmly engage himself to be the Lords Servant; Psal. 116. 16. *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant.*

IIII. VVe become Christs by vertue of the covenant. He enters into covenant with us, that he will graciously accept us to be his. Ezek. 16. 8. *I entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.* It is part of Gods Covenant that he will accept of us for his people. Heb. 8. 10. *Ye shall be to me a people.* And as the Lord makes a covenant with us to accept us for his, so we make a covenant with the Lord that we will become his people, and continue his for ever. 2 King. 11. 17. *Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the King and the People, that they should be the Lords People.*

C

Sect. 3.

Seet. 3. Several grounds of Consolation against the troubles of Life, and the fears and terrors of Death, arising from an interest in Christ.

We have seen what is meant by an interest in Christ, namely an actual right to, and propriety in Christ himself, as our Redeemer; and a right to, and propriety in all the saving benefits purchased by his Blood. VVe have seen also how Christ becomes ours, and how we become his. Now let us consider what solid grounds of comfort we may have both against the fears and terrours of Death, and the troubles of Life from our Redemption by Christ, or from interest in Christ, and those saving benefits which he hath purchased for us.

1. Jesus Christ hath fully, perfectly, and for ever reconciled unto God all that are his. The elect as well as others were by nature *the Children of wrath.* *Eph.* 2. 3. But by the Death and sufferings of Christ, they are redeemed from the wrath of God, both for present, and time to come. *Rom.* 5. 9. *Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* *1 Thes.* 1. 10. *Even Jesus which hath delivered us from wrath to come.* Our Lord Jesus Christ hath by his Death and sufferings fully reconciled all that are his, unto God for ever, *Col.* 1. 19, 20. *Having made peace through the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, &c.* All that are Christs, whether they be such as are already in Heaven,

Heaven, or such as are still upon the Earth, were reconciled to God by that blood that he shed upon the cross. All that are Christs in all ages of the world, and in all places of the world are reconciled to God by Christ. *2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.* And as Christ hath reconciled all that are his unto God, so he hath fully and perfectly reconciled them to God, and that for ever, by his offering up himself a Sacrifice to God for them. *Heb. 10. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected, for ever them that are sanctified.* I shall open this fulness and perfection of this Reconciliation in three or four particulars.

1. Jesus Christ by his Death hath so fully reconciled all that are his unto God; that he is pacified towards them, notwithstanding all their offences, whether original or actual, and will not impute any one of their offences to them *2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* The nature of reconciliation lyeth in pacifying God for the offence our sins have caused, and this pacification Christ our High Priest hath wrought for us, *Heb. 2. 17. That he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* And this pacification is so full, that it is a pacification for all offences. *Ezek. 16. 63. I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.*

2. Jesus Christ hath so fully reconciled all that are his unto God, that God hath laid aside all his wrath against them, and retaineth no fury at all against them. *Psal. 85. 3. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, thou hast turned thy self from the fierceness of thine anger. Isa. 27. 4. Fury is not in me.*

3. Jesus Christ hath so fully reconciled all that are his unto God, that the Lord hath sworn that he will be wroth with them no more. *Isa. 54. 9, 17. This is as the waters of Noah unto me, for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth, so I have sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. — This is the heritage of the Servants of the Lord.* But some may say, are not some of the Servants of Christ chastened very sorely, and do they not complain, that the wrath of God lyeth hard upon them as *Heman. Psal. 88. 7. 16.*

How then is God true to his Oath, that he will be wroth with them no more.

A. 1. The rebukes and chastnings of the Members of Christ, do not come from wrath, but love. *Rev. 3. 19. Whom I love, I rebuke and chasten.*

2. The people of God are subject to mistakes, when they judge according to sence, and not according to what is revealed in the word of God; when they judge according to sence and feeling, they may think many providences of God, to be expressions of his wrath,

wrath, which they might understand to be all Mercy, and to have no wrath in them, if they did judge according to Faith, and according to what they find in the word of God. For there we read that *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies.* Ps. 25. 10.

3. When the Lord swears that he will not be wroth, nor rebuke his Servants, it is to be understood of Eternal wrath, that he will not rebuke them, so as to destroy, for so rebuking is sometimes understood, namely of eternal destruction. Ps. 9. 5. *Thou hast rebuked the Heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.* For this is like the Oath of God concerning the waters that covered the Earth in *Noah's* time. God hath sworn that the Waters shall no more cover the Earth to destroy the Earth as it did in *Noah's* Flood, yet notwithstanding this Oath, God doth often chasten the Inhabitants of the Earth, with unseasonable rain and floods, but not such as shall destroy the world. So when the Lord swears, that he will not be wrath with, or rebuke his Servants, it's of eternal wrath, of casting them away for ever; yet he may, and often doth chasten them, with temporal chastisements.

4. Jesus Christ hath so fully reconciled all that are his unto God, that he hath not only pacified his Fathers Anger, but he hath restored, and brought them into the love and fa-

your of God, *Rom. 5. 1, 2. By whom also we have access by Faith into this grace wherein we stand.* By grace here is meant the love and favour of God, and by Christ we have not only peace with God, but access into and continuance in the grace and favour of God. By Christ we are brought into an higher degree of the love and favour of God, than *Adam* did enjoy while he was in innocency. For we are under a better Covenant, and have better promises than *Adam* had, *Adam* was in the favour of God, yet so as he was capable of losing the favour of God, and being a child of wrath; And by his fall he did lose the love of God. But they that are Christs are so confirmed in the love of God, that Gods loving kindness shall never depart from them. *Isa. 54. 10. The Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my peace be removed saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* And as God will not of himself take away his loving kindness, so neither can any creature in Hell or on Earth, separate us from the love of God. *Rom. 8. 38, 39. I am perswaded that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.*

Now our reconciliation to God by Jesus Christ is a ground of joy and strong consolation against

against the terrours of Death, and troubles of Life. *Rom. 5. 11. We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now recieved an atonement.* When we understand that our Lord Jesus Christ hath made an atonement for us, this may fill our hearts with joy, when death looks us in the face ; when other men tremble at the thoughts of God, they that are reconciled to him may joy in God, both while they live and when they dye. In the next verse, the Apostle speaks of death entring into the world by sin, and passing upon all men, for that all have sinned. *ver. 12.* And in the 3d. and 4th. verses he speaks of the tribulations we are liable to in this life. *We glory in Tribulations.* Yet in all our tribulations, and when we see death approaching and passing upon us, we may joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have received an atonement.

The knowledge of Gods love to our Souls may cause us to glory and rejoyce in the Lord in times of greatest mortality, when Death is coming in at our Windows, and entred into our houses, and cuts off both young and old, and there such a multitude of dead corpses that there are none to bury them. *Jer. 9. 21, 22. 24. Death is come up into our Windows, and is entered into our Palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets, speak, thus saith the Lord, even the Carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and*

as the handful after the harvest man, and none shall gather them — But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he knoweth and understandeth me. We see here that a man may attain to glory in dismal and dark days, in times of greatest mortality, when death is cutting down multitudes in all places, our houses, the streets, the fields, and we may see in what a man may glory at such a time, and that is in the knowledge of Gods love ; Let him glory in this that he knoweth and understandeth me that I am the Lord that exerciseth loving kindness. It was a great comfort to Jacob, when he understood that Esau was reconciled to him ; while he apprehended his brother to be offended, and that he came to meet in displeasure, he was greatly afraid and distressed. Gen. 32. 7. But when he saw his Brother was pleased with him, that made him exceeding joyful, even as if he had a sight of the face of God. Gen 33. 10. I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. If reconciliation with an offended brother be such a ground of comfort, what is reconciliation with an offended God ? Solomon speaks highly of the favour of a King, that is like life to a dying man, and like the Rain to the thirsty ground, very grateful and refreshing. Prov. 16. 15. In the light of the Kings Countenance is Life, and his favour is as a Cloud of the latter Rain. If there be such joy in the favour of an Earthly King, what joy is there in the

the favour of the King of Kings. Reconciliation with God affords strong Consolation against the Fears and Terrors of Death several ways.

1. Because such as are reconciled to God by the death of Christ shall assuredly be saved by Christ. *Rom. 5. 10. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life.*

2. Because when God is reconciled to us, and his wrath turned away from us, we may trust in him for Salvation, and all other good things, without being afraid of what death or men, or devils, or any creatures can do unto us; *Isa. 12. 1, 2. O Lord I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me; Behold God is my Salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid.* When God is reconciled to us, we need not fear what man can do to us. *Psal. 118. 7. The Lord is on my side, I will not fear. What can man do unto me?* Man can kill the body, and man can torture the body, but death can't hurt a man reconciled to God. When God is reconciled we may triumph over all our enemies, not only over man, but over death and the grave, and the devils, and Hell it self. *Rom. 8. 31. What shall we then say to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us?*

II. Jesus

✓ II: Jesus Christ by his death hath obtained for all that are his, a free full, perpetual pardon of all their sins, and this is a ground of strong consolation under the troubles of the world, and all the fears and terrors of death.

✓ The great end of Christs death was to expiate our sins, and to obtain for us forgiveness of sins. 1 Cor. 15. 3. *Christ dyed for our sins according to the Scriptures.* Gal. 1. 4. *Who gave himself for our sins.* 1 Joh. 3. 5. *And ye know that he was manifest to take away our sins* Joh. 1. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.* Heb. 9. 26. *Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the Sacrifice of himself.*
 ✓ Now concerning this pardon which our Lord Jesus hath obtained by his offering up himself a Sacrifice for us, let us observe these four things.

✓ 1. It is a full and generat pardon of all and every one of our sins; 1 Joh. 1. 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* All sorts of sins, sins of Omission and Commission, sins of Ignorance, and sins against light, original and actual sins are cleansed away by the Blood of Christ, and every particular sin, great and small is cleansed by the Blood of Christ. Tit. 2. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.* He did not design our Redemption from some one sin, or from many, but to redeem us from all iniquity by his giving himself to death for us.

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This was typified by the scape goat, over him *Aaron* laid his hands, and confessed all the sins, and all the aggravations that were in the sins of the Children of *Israel*, and the goat bore away all their iniquities into the land of forgetfulness. *Lev. 16. 21, 22. Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins. — And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a Land not inhabited.* This did signifie Gods laying all our sins upon Christ. *Isa. 53. 6. And Christ making satisfaction for them all, bearing them all away by his death.*

1 Pet. 2. 24. Who his own self, bare our sins in his own body upon the tree. The discharge that Christ by his death hath obtained for us, is a full discharge. VVhatever sin may be charged upon us, by the Law, by Conscience, by Satan, who is our accuser; by the justice of God, all is discharged, and quitted, and answered by the death of Christ. *Rom. 8. 33, 34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect. It is God that justifieth — It is Christ that dyed.*

Out of respect to the Death of Christ, God will forgive us all our trespasses, how many, or how great soever they have been. *Col. 2. 13. Having forgiven you all trespasses. Ps. 103. 3. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities. Ps. 85. 2. Thou hast forgiven all the iniquities of thy people, thou hast covered all our sin.* And that we may

may be the more fully assured that the pardon which our Lord Jesus hath obtained for us, is a full and general pardon of all offences, the Lord hath obliged himself by many promises for Christs sake, to pardon all, and every one of our sins. *Jer. 33. 8. I will cleanse them from all their Iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their Iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. Ezek. 36. 25. From all your filthiness, and all your Idols I will cleanse you.*

2. Our Lord Jesus hath obtained of God, that this general pardon shall be for ever, that all our sins should be forgiven for ever, and never be remembered against us to Eternity.

Heb. 8. 12. I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins, and their Iniquities will I remember no more. And this is implied in such promises as these. *Mich. 7. 19. Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the Sea:* that is, as *Drusius* observ's, *atēnā oblivione delet bit memoriam peccatorum nostrorum.* He will blot out the remembrance of our sins for ever.

Those things that are cast into the depths of the Sea, are wholly, and for ever, taken out of our sight. *Psal. 103. 12. As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.* That is, so far, as they shall never be laid to our charge any more. For the East and West are at that great distance, that they shall never come together.

gether. *Ezek. 33. 16. None of the sins that he hath committed, shall be mentioned to him.*

3. The Lord Jesus hath obtained a general, and perpetual pardon of all offences, upon terms of free grace, without any respect to merit or worthiness in us, that are partakers of it. *Rom. 3. 24. Being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Eph. 1. 7. In whom we have Redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* It is from grace, free-graces, the riches of grace, that we have pardon of our Sins, through the blood of Christ. It is not for our sakes, but for his own sake, and his Sons sake, that the Lord pardons our sins. *Isa. 43. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy Transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sin Eph. 4. 32. God, for Christs sake, hath forgiven you.*

4. This free, this everlasting, this general pardon of all offences, our Lord Jesus Christ hath purchased for all that are his; that is, for all that do, and all that shall believe in him, in all places, and all ages of the world. *Act. 13. 39. By him all that believe, are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. Acts 10. 43. To him gave all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*

Now this free, this everlasting, this full and general pardon, which our Lord Jesus Christ hath

hath obtained for all that are his, by shedding his blood for them, is a ground of strong consolation under all the troubles of life, and all fears and terrours of death. *Rom. 5. 1, 3. Being therefore justified by Faith—We glory in Tribulations.* Justified persons, whose sins are remitted through the blood of Christ, may glory not only when they are got out of their troubles, but when they are in the midst of all their tribulations. *Isa. 33. 24. The Inhabitant shall not say I am sick, the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquities.* It is not said the Inhabitant shall be without sickness. The greatest of Gods favourites are liable to sickness, as well as other men. *Daniel* was a man, greatly beloved, yet he was sick and faint many days. *Dan. 8. 27. I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain dayes.* And it is said of *Lazarus, John 11. 3. Lord, he, whom thou lovest, is sick.* Justified persons are oft times sick, as well as other men, but the pardon of sin, doth so sweeten their affliction, that they shall not say I am sick; that is, they shall not say by way of complaint, and discontent. Sin unpardoned, makes afflictions like gall and wormwood, that is, exceeding bitter. *Lam. 3. 5, 15, 42. He hath compassed me with gall—He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood—We have transgressed and rebelled, and thou hast not pardoned.* But pardon of sin doth so sweeten the bitterest afflictions, that it takes away all causes of

of complaint under the rod of God. The Inhabitant shall not say I am sick, and why is it, because there is no sickness? No, but because the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquitie. VVhen a man is taken sick, and his sickness for ought he knoweth, may be his death sickness; when he is so sick, that he can't go, or stand, or set up, but is confined to his Bed: if his sins be forgiven him, he may be of good cheer. *Math. 9. 2. Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.* Here is a sick man, his sickness was very uncomfortable, he was sick of the Palsie, he was brought very low, he kept his Bed, there was no way for his recovery but a miracle; yet before Christ gave him any intimation of his purpose to heal him, he bid him be of good cheer, and why! because his sins were forgiven him.

This pardon of all our sins, which is obtained for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, may comfort us against all the fears and terrours of Death, on several accounts.

(1.) VVhen our sins are pardoned, the sting of Death is taken away. *For the sting of Death is sin. 1 Cor. 15. 56.* And when Sin is forgiven, Death hath lost its sting, and when the sting of Death is taken away, we need not be afraid of Death, it can do us no harm.

(2.) VVhen our sins are pardoned, we may be assured our Souls shall be saved; for God glorifieth all whom he justifieth. *Rom. 8. 30. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. Tir. 3. 7.*

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That being justified by his grace, we should be made Heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.

3. Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, hath obtained for all that are his, freedom from eternal condemnation, and this is a ground of strong consolation under all the troubles of this life, and against the fears and terrours of Death. There is not any one person that belongeth to Christ, that hath an interest in Christ, that shall come into condemnation. *Rom. 8. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.* That our Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed all that are his from eternal condemnation, is evident several ways.

1. Because Christ dyed for us, *Rom. 8. 34.* Who shall condemn? It is Christ *that dyed.* The Death of Christ is our security from Eternal Death. He laid down his life on purpose to ransom us from Eternal condemnation. *Math. 20. 28. The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many;* out of respect to, and for the sake of this ransom, God will deliver all that are Christs, from going down into the bottomless pit. *Job 33. 24. Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.*

2. The ground and cause of our Condemnation is taken away by the Death of Christ, which is sin. For God condemneth no man but for sin; and therefore Christ having by his Death taken away our sins, hath taken away condemnation from us.

3. God,

3. God out of respect to the death and sufferings of Christ hath promised, that none that believe in Christ shall come into condemnation. *Joh. 3. 16, 18. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life — He that believeth on him is not condemned. Joh. 5. 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from Death unto Life.* ✓

4. The Keys of Hell are in the hands of Jesus Christ, he hath power to cast into Hell, and to keep out of Hell whom he pleaseth. *Rev. 1. 18. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell and of Death.* And if the Keys of Hell be in the hands of Christ, then all they that are Christs are upon sure grounds, that they shall not come into condemnation, for he will not in any wise cast any of his Members into eternal torments. *Joh. 6. 37. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*

And seeing all they that are Christs are redeemed from eternal condemnation, this may comfort them under all the troubles of this world, and against the fears and terrors of Death. It may scatter and dispel all our sorrows, and fill our hearts with joy and gladness when we understand and believe that we are

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ransomed

ransomed and delivered from eternal torments. *Isa. 35. 10. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with Songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

✓ This hath relation to the deliverance of the Jews out of the Babylonian Captivity, which was a type of our deliverance from eternal misery; when God brought them out of their captivity, they were filled with joy and singing. *Psal. 126. 1, 2. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* Now if there were such joy and singing by the ransomed of the Lord, that were delivered from *Babylon*, what joy and gladness may arise to the ransomed of the Lord from their deliverance from Hell torments? Hell is a worse place than *Babylon*, the captivity of *Babylon* was but for 70 years, but Hell torments are for Eternity. *David* speaks of his deliverance from Hell as an unexpressible Mercy. and that he would praise God with all his heart, and glorifie him for evermore, for such a great mercy. *Psal. 86. 12, 13. I will praise thee O Lord my God with all my heart, and I will glorifie thy name for evermore, for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my Soul from the lowest Hell.* And this his deliverance from the lowest Hell was a comfort to him, when the proud rose up against him, and the assemblies of violent men sought after his Soul.

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ver. 14. 17. When we know and believe that we are freed from condemnation by the death of Christ, this may cause us to triumph over death, when we are killed all the day long, and counted as Sheep for the slaughter. Rom. 8. 34, 36, 37. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that dyed — For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as Sheep for the slaughter, Nay in all these things we are more then Conquerors through him that loved us. When we are freed from condemnation, we may triumph over Death, though we walk in danger of Death all the day long, more than Conquerours triumph over their conquered enemies.

IV. They that are Christs have a sure and undoubted right to eternal life, and that sure hope which they have of eternal life is a ground of strong consolation under all the troubles of this life, and against the fears and terrours of Death. They that are Christs have a sure and undoubted right to Eternal Life 1 Joh. 5. 12. *He that hath the Son hath Life.* It is not said, he shall have Life, but he hath Life, that is, he may be as sure of it, as if he had it already. He hath an undoubted right, an unquestionable Title to eternal life. He hath it in the purpose and decree of God, he hath it in the promise of God; And that by life here, is meant eternal life is evident from the following words; they that have Christ dwelling in their hearts by Faith, have a sure ground and foundation

foundation for their hope of eternal glory. *Col. 1. 27. Christ in you the hope of Glory.* That all that are Christs have an undoubted right to, and sure grounds to hope for eternal Life ; may be demonstrated several wayes.

✓ 1. Our Lord Jesus Christ dyed on purpose that he might purchase and procure eternal life for all that should believe on him. *Joh. 3. 14, 15. As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.* By the lifting up of the Son of man is meant his suffering death upon the Cross. *Joh. 12. 32, 33.* And this death he suffered that he might purchase eternal life for all that should believe on him. *1 Thes. 5. 9, 10. God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ interceedeth with his Father on the behalf of all those that are given to him, that they may be with him where he is, that is, in the Kingdom of Heaven. *Joh. 17 24. Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.* And what Christ asked of his Father shall assuredly be granted. *Joh. 11. 42. I know that thou hearest me always.*

3. God for Christs sake hath promised eternal life to all that are Christs, that is, to all persons

persons that do or shall believe on Christ to the end of the World. *Joh. 3. 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. 1 Joh. 2. 25. And this is the promise, that he hath promised us eternal life. And the promise of God is a sure ground to hope for eternal life. Tit. 1. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the World began.*

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ hath power over all flesh given to him by the Father, that he may give eternal life to all that are given to him by the Father. *Joh. 17. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, to as many as thou hast given him.* And therefore they that are Christs may be assured that they shall have eternal life, seeing Christ hath power to give eternal life to whom he will, and this power over all flesh was given him purposely that he might give eternal life to all that were given him by the Father.

5. God hath given us this record concerning his Son, that eternal life is in his Son, and that eternal life is his free gift, and that he will give it to all that have his Son, and if we do not believe this record that God hath given of his Son we should make God a Liar. *1 Joh. 5. 10, 11, 12. He that believeth not God hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is*

the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, he that hath the Son hath Life. Eternal Life is in Christ, and therefore if we believe the record that God hath given of his Son, namely that God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son, we must then conclude it as a certain truth, that he that hath the Son, hath Life.

Now seeing such as have an interest in Christ, have sure grounds to hope for eternal life, it followeth hence that they have good grounds of strong consolation under all the troubles of this life, and also against the fears and terrors of Death. For hope of eternal life will help us to rejoyce greatly in the midst of all our troubles. *Rom. 5. 2, 3 We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God, and not only so, but we glory in tribulations.* When we have good hope of the glory of God, that is, of enjoying the Kingdom of Heaven, which is a most glorious Kingdom, we may rejoyce and glory in the midst of our greatest tribulations. *1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 6. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you: wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.* Here is joy, great joy in the midst of manifold temptations that did cause heaviness, and
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whence did this joy proceed? from a lively hope of an heavenly inheritance. *Wherein ye greatly rejoyce* — That is, in which hope, or in hope of which inheritance. So *Heb. 10. 34. Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in your selves that ye have in Heaven a better and more enduring substance.* The spoiling of our goods for which we have laboured many years is wont to cause sorrow and lamentation *Jer. 9. 19. A voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, how are we spoiled!* yet the hope of a reward in Heaven will help us to take the spoiling of our goods joyfully.

The hope of eternal life will take away the fears and terrors of Death, when a man hath good hope of his Salvation, it will be no trouble, no terror to such a man to dye, but he may dye in peace. *Luk. 2. 29, 30. Lord now lettest thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation.* The hope of eternal life will so far take off the fear and terrors of death, that it will make us desire and long for our dissolution, that we may be with Christ in Heaven. *Phil. 1. 23. Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.* *2 Cor. 5. 1, 2. We know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from Heaven.*

V. They that are Christs shall have the

Lords presence with them, under the troubles which they meet with while they live, and also when they come to die. Our sins made a separation between God and our Souls. *Isa.* 59. 2. But the sufferings of Christ have made up this breach. *1 Pet.* 3. 18. *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that we might be brought unto God.* One of the names given to Christ was *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted is *God with us.* *Math.* 1. 23. Whereas by the fall of *Adam* God was against us, and was separated from us, through Christ he is reconciled to us, and is become with us, a God that will afford us his presence; That such as are Christs shall have the presence of God and Christ with them under all their troubles, yea at all times both while they live and when they dye. See *Heb.* 13. 5. *He hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* And what he hath said he will surely perform it. If he will never leave nor forsake us, then at no time of life, nor at the hour of death. *Mat.* 28. 20. *Lo I am with you always to the end of the world.* Here is a note of attention set before this promise, that the Members of Christ may take notice of it for their comfort and encouragement. *Lo I am with you* — I that have all power in Heaven and in Earth given to me, I am with you, how long? always to the end of the world, not only with his Apostles and Disciples that lived in those days, but with all his Ministers and Members to the end

of the world, and at all times. And more especially in times of trouble, the Lord hath promised his presence to such as belong to Christ. *Pf. 91. 15. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble. Isa. 43. 1, 2. Fear not, For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

Now the presence of God going along with us, will comfort us, living and dying; it will be our refreshment under all manner of troubles. *Exod. 33. 14. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* Moses was forty years in the Wilderness with the Israelites, who were a froward people, and both the difficulties of the place in which he walked, and the difficulties of the people among whom he walked, created him much vexation and trouble; but under his troubles he found ease and comfort from the presence of God, going with him. A man that hath the Almighty, All-sufficient God with him, need not fear any thing. *Isa. 4. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be thou not dismayed, for I am thy God.* He need not fear any kind of Death, or any kind of troubles; he need not fear Men or Devils; for God can do more for us, then all Creatures can do against us. This was *Dauids* conso-

consolation against the fear of Death, that he had God with him, and did so raise his courage, that he feared no evil, when he was passing through the Valley of the shadow of Death. *Psf. 23. 4. Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.*

Obs. It is true may some say, If God were with us, this would raise our Faith, dispel our fears, put joy and gladness into our hearts, under all our troubles, living and dying; but we can't find God is with us. Yea, many that have an interest in Christ, find God standing afar off, and hiding himself in time of trouble: as we see, *Psf. 10. 2. Isa. 49. 14.*

A. The Lord is alway's ready and truly, though not always sensibly present with them. *Psf. 125. 2. As the Mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth, even for ever.* The Lord is for ever with, and round about his people; although sometimes their eyes are held, and they perceive it not. And then their Faith is weak, so that judging by Sence, rather than by Faith, they think God hath forsaken them, when as he is graciously with them, and they know it not. What *Jacob* said of the place where he lodged, *Gen. 28. 16. Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not.* The same may be said of some persons, *Surely the Lord is with them, and they know it not.* Now the Lord is alwayes with his people these two wayes,

wayes, even when they are ready to say that he hath forsaken them.

1. He is present with them in respect of his love and favour. *Isa. 54. 10. My kindness shall not depart from thee. Ps. 89. 33. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take away from him. Job. 13. 1. Jesus having loved his own, loved them to the end.*

2. The Lord is alwayes present with his people by inward supports, and secret upholdings of them. *Deut. 33. 27. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting armes—Isa. 41. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee—I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Ps. 73. 23. Nevertheless I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand. Though David was ready to say in his hast, that he was cast out of Gods sight, yet he found upon recollecting himself, that he was continually with God, and upheld by him.*

6. Interest in Christ is a ground of strong consolation under all sorts of troubles, and also against the terrours of Death, because they that are Christs are in covenant with God, and are heirs of all the promises. They are in Covenant with God, *Ezek. 16. 8. I sware unto thee, and entred into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. They are Heirs of all the promises. Gal. 3. 29. And if you be Christs, then are ye Abrahams seed, and heirs according to the promise. 2 Cor.*

1. 20. *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen to the glory of God by us.* If all the promises of God be upon, and Amen in Christ, then when Christ is ours, all the promises of God are ours. And this is a ground of strong consolation under all manner of troubles to be in covenant with God, and to have an interest in all the promises of God. For the Scripture is full of great and precious promises, promises of all good things pertaining to this life, and the life which is to come; and to have an interest in all these promises, is a matter of unspeakable joy. By acquaintance with the covenant and promise of God, our Souls may dwell at ease, whatever troubles come upon our outward man. *Pf. 25. 13, 14. His Soul shall dwell at ease—and he will shew them his Covenant.* The Psalmist speaking of a man that feareth God, saith, *his Soul shall dwell at ease—and then sheweth how this is brought to pass, and that is, by acquaintance with the Covenant, He will shew them his Covenant.* The dwelling of the Soul at ease, implyeth the abundance and continuance of inward and Spiritual comforts, which are enjoyed by our acquaintance with the Covenant, The promises are sweet Cordials, which refresh the Soul in times of greatest distress. *Pf. 60. 6. God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce.* In the three first verses, there are sad complaints of grievous afflictions, *O God thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased—Thou hast*

hast made the Earth tremble, thou hast broken it—Thou hast shewed thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Now what will comfort a man at such a time as this? What will make a man rejoyce under such amazing providences, when God seems to cast off, and be displeased? when God scatters his people, shewes them hard things, makes them drink the Wine of astonishment, when the very Earth trembles at Gods judgments? The promises of God will comfort in such a dark day as this is, *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce.* When

David was in a persecuted condition, and they that persecuted him, were no mean men, but great Persons, Princes, *Saul*, and his Courtiers, he had exceeding great joy in the Promises of God, *Psal. 119. 161, 162. Princes have persecuted me without a cause—I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great spoil.* When

David was in a dying condition, he found strong consolation from his interest in Gods covenant. *2 Sam. 23. 1, 5. Now these be the last words of David—Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my desire, and all my Salvation, although he make it not to grow.* See what was *Dauids* comfort, when he was speaking his last words, it was his interest in the Everlasting Covenant. *He hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant,* and the assurance he had

of

of his Salvation by virtue of this Covenant.
This is all my Salvation.

7. Interest in Christ is a ground of strong consolation under all sorts of troubles, and against the terrours of Death; because when Christ is ours, all his saving benefits are ours. As *Ahab* said to *Benhadad*, *1 King. 20. 4. I am thine, and all that I have.* So may I say, If Christ be thine, all that Christ hath is thine. Hence such as are interested in Christ, are said to be *joynt heirs with Christ*, *Rom 8. 17.* When Christ is ours, all things are ours, things present, and things to come, life and death, this world, and the world to come; adversitie and prosperitie, all things are ours, ordained and designed for our good. *1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods.* And if this will not comfort us to hear that life and death, things present, and things to come, the Kingdom of Heaven, and all things are ours, what else will. VVhen Christ is ours, his Righteousness is ours. *Phil. 3. 9.* His blood, and all that he hath purchased with his blood, all his merits are ours, and his intercession is ours. God is our Father, the Spirit is our comforter, Heaven is our Inheritance, yea, all good things are ours.

Obs. How is this true, that they are Christs, have all things, when as many that are Christs, are ful of wants; they want Riches, Friends, &c. and in great straits, and have suffered the loss of all things for Christ; and can these be consistent together, that a man should have all things, and yet want many things.

A. 1. They that are Christs, have all things virtually in that contentment and satisfaction which they have in Christ, and from Christ. They are, or may be as well contented, as if they had all the world. Thus it was with the Apostle in his wants and straits, when he was as poor to outward appearance, as a man that hath nothing; he was as well contented, as if he had possessed the whole world. 2 Cor. 6. 10: *As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.* A man that hath a contented mind, is as well satisfied, as if he had all the world. Gen. 33. 11. Take I pray thee my blessing, that is brought unto thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough. The Hebrew is *lichol*, I have all things. Hence note that they have enough, that have contented and satisfied minds, they have all things.

2. They that are Christs, have all things in the providential care of God, though they be poor, and in straits, and have suffered the loss of

of all things, the providence of God takes care of them to supply them with all things that are needful, with all things that are good for them. *1 Pet. 5. 7. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* The providence of God taketh such care for us in all things, that we need not trouble our selves with anxious thoughts, or cares about any thing, but may cast all our care upon the Lord. The Providence of God doth, and will take care of us, to supply us with all needful things, and all things that are good for us. *Phil 4. 19. My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Jesus Christ.*

3. They have all things in the Covenant and Promise of God. For in the Covenant there are all things promised, that they do, or can desire. *2 Sam. 23. 5. He hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant, and this is all my Salvation, and all my desire.* VVe can't desire more then Grace and Glory, and all good things, now these are all promised to us. *Pf. 84. 11. The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* And what things are ours by promise, are ours by a better, and a more sure tenure, then what is ours by actual possession without a promise, because what we have in our possession, may be lost, may be taken from us, but the promises no creature can take from us.

4. They

4. They have all things eminently and transcendently in God and Christ, in having God for their portion, and Christ for their Saviour. What Solomon saith of money. *Eccl. 10. 19. Money answereth all things.* The same may be said as truly of God and Christ; God answereth all things, and Christ answereth all things. When we enjoy God who is the fountain of all good, in the enjoyment of him, for our God, we do inherit all things. *Rev. 21. 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.* They have all things in Christ their head, what the head hath, the head hath it for the good of the Members. Now Christ our head hath all things for the good of his church. *Eph. 1. 22. And gave him to be the head over all things in the Church.*

5. They have the good of all things, though not the actual possession of all things. *Rom. 8. 28. We know that all things work together for good to them, that love God.* Yea, their very wants are for their good; for they put them upon living by Faith, and stir up in them a Spirit of Prayer, and keep them humble, &c.

6. They are heirs of all things, though they are not come to the full enjoyment of their inheritance; for they are joynt heirs with Christ. *Rom. 8. 17. If children then heirs, heirs of God,*

and joyne heirs with Christ. And Christ is heir of all things. *Heb. 1. 2. Hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.* The heir while a child is Lord of all, though he hath not the actual possession of his inheritance. *Gal. 4. 1.* So it is with us, we are heirs of all things by virtue of our Union with Christ, though we have not the actual possession of our inheritance.

8. Interest in Christ is a ground of strong consolation, under all troubles of life and terrors of death, because all that are Christs are blessed in and by Christ, and are so blessed as no troubles, nor death it self can make them miserable, but after their Union with Christ, they are blessed, and shall continue blessed for ever. I shall open the blessedness of such as are Christs in these particulars.

(1.) All that are Christs, are in a most blessed and happy condition. *Psal. 2. 12. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Gal. 3. 8. In thee shall all Nations be blessed.* That is, in thy seed that shall proceed out of thy loins, that is, the promised *Messiah*, as appears from *Act. 3. 25, 26.* By all Nations being blessed in Christ, we are to understand all persons in all Nations that believe on Christ, as the following words shew. *ver. 9. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham; what Laban said concerning Jacob. Gen. 30. 27. I have*

have learned by experience, that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. That may they that are Christs say concerning Christ, I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for Christs sake.

(2.) They that are Christs are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. *Eph 1. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* Spiritual blessings are the best blessings, now God hath not only blessed us with some, with many, but with all spiritual blessings, and that not only all spiritual blessings which are enjoyed in this life, but with all spiritual blessings which are reserved for us in heavenly places. And we are blessed with all these spiritual blessings both pertaining to this life, and to be enjoyed in heavenly places in the life to come, in Christ Jesus. Which is better than if we had them in our own hands. For *Adam* had all blessings in his own hands, and lost them, but what is put into the hands of Christ he will keep safe for ever.

(3.) That blessedness which we have in and by Jesus Christ, is eternal blessedness. Besides that blessedness which they that are Christs have in this life, all the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven are prepared for them, and shall be given to them for their inheritance. *Mat. 25. 34. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the*

foundation of the world. His blessing is eternal life. God hath blessed us in Christ with the highest blessings he had to give, and we were capable to receive, and that for ever. For through Christ he hath given himself unto us, to be our God. *Ezek. 36. 28. I will be your God.* And he hath promised to give us his Kingdom. *Luk. 12. 32. Fear not little flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* And what greater blessings hath God to give than himself and his Kingdom. And therefore what is said of *David? Psal. 21. 6. Thou hast made him most blessed for ever.* The same may be said of all that are Christs, God hath not only made them blessed, but hath made them most blessed for ever; for they that come to Christ upon the call of the Gospel are made partakers of the sure mercies of *David. Isa. 53. 3.*

4. It is the immutable purpose and unalterable promise of God to make all the Members of Christ most blessed for ever, and he hath confirmed the immutability of his counsel and promise with his oath: which may give strong consolation to all that in the sense of their lost and undone condition have fled for refuge to *Jesus Christ*, that by and in him they may obtain Life and Salvation. *Heb. 6. 13, 14, 17. 18.* This portion of Scripture setting forth the great assurance which God hath given all that believe in Christ, that he will make them blessed and happy for ever, which is a foundation
of

of strong consolation, I shall observe several things out of it.

1. God made a promise to *Abraham* that in blessing he would bless him, that is, that he would give him all things requisite to true blessedness, that he would make him most happy and blessed for ever, that he would never leave off blessing him, but would bless him for ever. This includes the promise of eternal life, for no man is a blessed man, but he that shall have eternal life, all others are under Gods curse, *Mat. 25. 34, 41*. The blessings of Heaven are the main part of our blessedness. *Mat. 5. 3*.

2. God confirmed this promise of giving *Abraham* all things requisite to true blessedness, with the greatest oath that he could swear. For, *because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, surely blessing I will bless thee. surely, that is, surely as I live, as sure as I am God, I will bless thee, and make thee blessed for ever.*

3. This promise and this oath were not only made to *Abraham*, but intended for the strengthening of the Faith, and the consolation of all the heirs of promise to the end of the world. *Wherein, that is in which promise, God willing to shew to the heirs of promise —* 'Tis not said to shew to *Abraham*, but to shew to the heirs of promise, confirmed it with an oath, so that the promise and oath of God are intended for all the heirs of promise. That

we might have a strong consolation. 'Tis not said *Abraham*, so that the oath and promise of God is as much for our comfort as *Abrahams*.

4. Gods oath added to his promise sheweth that his counsel and decree for blessing *Abraham* and all the heirs of promise is immutable, he will not alter his purpose or promise of blessing any of the heirs of promise.

5. God is abundantly willing that the heirs of promise should know the immutability of his counsel of giving them all things requisite to true blessedness.

6. Such as have fled to Christ for refuge, to be saved from wrath to come, and to give them eternal life may have strong consolation. *That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

By fleeing for refuge we may understand fleeing to Christ, that we may escape from wrath to come, and may obtain eternal life and Salvation. The Cities of refuge under the law, whether the Man-slayer was to flee that he might be preserved from the avenger of Blood, did typifie Christ to whom we are to flee for refuge that we may escape the wrath and vengeance of God, which is due to us for our sins. Eternal Life is the hope which is set before us to be laid hold upon. *Tit. 2, 13.*

Looking for that blessed hope — That is for eternal life. *Tit. 1, 2, In hope of eternal life* — This hope is set before us in the Gospel.

Col.

Col. 1. 5. For the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the Truth of the Gospel. And therefore it is called the hope of the Gospel ver. 23. And be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. This is the hope we are to lay hold upon. 1 Tim. 6. 12. Lay hold upon Eternal Life. So that our fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, is this, our fleeing unto Jesus Christ that we may escape that wrath which is due to us for our sins, and that we may in him and through him obtain Eternal Life and Salvation.

7. They that have thus fled for refuge, have the promise and oath of God, which are two immutable things, to assure them that God in blessing will bless them. For the oath and promise is to them as well as unto Abraham; and what doth this imply, Surely blessing I will bless thee. A. Surely I will pardon all thy sins. Rom. 4. 7, 8. And surely I will give thee eternal life. Mat. 23. 34. and 5. 9. And surely I will pour out my Spirit upon thee. Isa. 44. 3. Gal. 3. 14. And surely I will turn thee from thine iniquities. Acts 3. 26. And surely I will give thee all good things. Ps. 21. 3. And surely I will make thee a blessed man for ever. 1 Chron. 17. 27.

8. These two immutable things, the promise and the oath of God, as sure as he liveth to bless for ever all that flee to Christ for eternal life, this may give them strong consolati-

on, yea this may give them such strong consolation as no troubles, nothing whatever shall make void their comfort; which is the next head I am to speak to.

(5.) The blessed estate and condition of such as have an interest in Christ is made so sure, and so firmly settled upon them, that no troubles of this life, nor Death it self can make void their blessedness. They are and continue blessed under all their afflictions and temptations, as well as in their greatest prosperity. *Psal. 94. 12. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law. Jam. 1. 12. Blessed is the man that endureth Temptation, for when he is tryed, he shall receive the Crown of Life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* They are and continue blessed, when they dye as well as while they live. *Rev. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.* Death is so far from making void the blessedness of those that are Christs, that it puts them into the actual possession of the Blessings of Heaven, which is far greater blessedness then they enjoyed, whilst they were in this world.

Now the favour which God hath shewn to those that are Christs in bestowing all this blessedness upon them, and in making them most blessed for ever, is a ground of exceeding great joy. *Psal. 21. 6. Thou hast made him most blessed for ever, thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.* This blessedness

ness which is confirmed to them that are Christs by two immutable things, the oath and the promise of God is a ground of strong consolation in all estates and conditions, of such strong Consolation as cannot be made void by any troubles or by death it self, as hath been already shewed from *Heb. 6. 13, 14, 17, 18.*

Seft. 3. More grounds of consolation against the troubles of the world, to such as have an interest in Christ.

Seeing the way to Heaven lyeth through many tribulations, and experience sheweth it is an hard matter for Christians to bear up chearfully under the manifold troubles they meet with in this world, I shall add some more grounds of comfort for such as have an interest in Christ, against all the troubles they are liable to in this world.

§. The World is conquered by Christ. what comfort ariseth hence.

1. it is a great comfort to a Christian under the troubles of the world, to consider that Christ hath overcome the World. *Jch. 16. 32. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* By the world which Christ hath overcome we may understand all things that are in the world which hinder the peace, Consolation and Salvation of the Members of Christ, as the Prince of the World, which is a Title given to Satan, the

the Rulers of the world, the men of the world, the troubles of the world, the temptations of the world, the corruptions that are in the world through Lust. All that is in the world, which is contrary to us, Christ hath overcome for us. Now Christs overcoming the world is a ground of comfort against the troubles of the world on several accounts, as.

1. Jesus Christ having overcome the world, the whole world with all things in the world, is now at his disposal. The Prince of the world, and all the powers of the world, and all the men of the world can do nothing in the world but by the permission of Christ. He is Prince of the Kings of the earth, and governs and over-rules all their counsels and designs. *Rev. 1. 5. Jesus Christ the Prince of the Kings of the Earth.* The men of the world can do nothing against any of the Members of Christ, though they be great men, though Rulers, but what he gives them power to do. *Joh. 19. 11. Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* What Christ saith here of himself concerning *Pilate*, is true of all his Members, concerning all the Rulers of the world, they can have no power at all against any of the Members of Christ, except it be given them from above, and this is a great quieting to the hearts of the People of God against the men and troubles of the world.

2. Jesus Christ who overcame the World
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is the Captain of our Salvation. *Heb. 2. 10.* And he did not only overcome the world for himself, but for us, *Gal. 1. 4.* Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. By his Conquest he obtained our deliverance from this present evil world. We may expect while we are in the world sharp Conflicts with the troubles of the world. *Heb. 10. 32.* Ye endured a great sight of Afflictions. But this is our comfort, we have to do with a Conquered Enemy, an Enemy that may oppose us, but shall not hurt us. *Luk. 10. 19.* Behold I give unto you power to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Serpents are an embleme of subtle enemies. *Gen. 3. 1.* Now the Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field. *Mat. 10. 16.* Be wise as Serpents. And of cruel enemies that seek our destruction. *1 Cor. 10. 9.* They were destroyed of Serpents. The worst of men are compared to Scorpions. *Ezek. 2. 6.* And thou Son of man be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though Briars and Thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among Scorpions. Scorpions here signifies wicked men which spoke big words against the Prophet. Now by the help of Christ we shall tread on those enemies that are like Serpents and Scorpions, and all the power of the enemy, so far as nothing shall by any means hurt

hurt us. And there are three negatives in the Greek, which is the more remarkable to assure us of the truth of what is spoken.

3. Jesus Christ who hath overcome the World, will enable us through Faith in him to overcome the world our selves. *1 Joh. 5. 4. 5. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World, and this is the Victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.*

4. By Christs overcoming the world, the world is become ours, the troubles of the world which would of themselves hinder our Salvation, shall be made through the Conquest of Christ to further our Salvation. *Phil. 1. 19. I know that this shall turn to my Salvation.* The Apostle speaks of his Bonds, and of the afflictions some evil minded men thought to add to his Bonds; *ver 13. 16.* And he knew that his afflictions should be so far from hindring, that it should be a furtherance of his Salvation. See also *2 Cor. 1. 6. Whether we be afflicted it is for your Consolation and Salvation, which is effectual in enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.* The Salvation of the Corinthians was effectual, that is powerfully promoted, effectually carried by enduring the same sufferings, which the Apostle endured. Hence the World through Christ is said to be ours, as well as all other things. *1 Cor. 1. 21, 22, 23.* Because even the troubles of the World are
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through Christ made to work for our advantage.

§. The intercession of Christ, a ground of comfort against the troubles of the World.

II. The intercession of Christ is a ground of comfort against the troubles of the World. *Joh 17. 9, 13. I pray for them whom thou hast given me - And these things I speak in the World, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* He acquainted them with his praying for them, on purpose that their hearts might be filled with joy. It is a comfort to such as are in affliction to hear that good men are always mindful of them in their Prayers to God. *1 Thes. 3. 6, 7. You have a good remembrance of us alwayes - Therefore Brethren we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your Faith..* If it were good tidings to the Apostle to hear that the *Thessalonians* had good remembrance of him alwayes, and that which did comfort him in all his affliction and distress. How much more may it comfort us in all our affliction and distress to hear that Jesus Christ hath good remembrance of us alwayes, and ever liveth to make intercession for us. For

(1.) Though Christ be in Heaven and we are upon the Earth, he beareth us upon his heart continually. This was typified by the high Priest under the Law, *Aaron* bore the names and the judgment of the Children of

Israel

Israel upon his heart continually, when he went into the holy place; Exod. 28. 29, 30. And Aaron shall bear the names of the Children of Israel upon the Breast plate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place for a memorial before the Lord continually — And shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel before the Lord continually. Aaron the high Priest was a Type of Christ who is our great high Priest. Heb. 4. 14. Aarons going in unto the holy place was a Type of Christs ascending into Heaven. Heb. 9. 24. What Aaron did Typically when he entred into the holy place, that Christ doth really for us now he is in Heaven. And what was it that Aaron did when he went into the holy place.

1. He bore the names, and he bore the judgment of the children of *Israel* upon his heart. The judgment of the Children of *Israel* may signifie all their causes, their affairs, their condition; this teacheth us, Christ our high Priest knoweth his by name, and that both their persons and conditions are born upon his heart.

2 *Aaron* bore the names and judgments of the Children of *Israel* upon his heart at all times when he went into the holy place; twice it is mentioned, that he bore them continually which teacheth us that neither our persons or conditions are at any time forgotten of Christ, but they are upon his heart continually now that he is in Heaven. *Psal. 73. 23. I am continually*
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ually with thee. That is, continually upon thy heart, under thy care. And as *David* was, so are we continually with Christ.

3. *Aaron* bore both the names and judgment of the Children of *Israel* for a memorial before the Lord continually. So Christ our high Priest, as he carrieth our persons and conditions upon his own heart, so he continually presenteth our case and condition before his Father. The Apostle said, *2 Cor. 7. 3. You are in our hearts to die and live with you.* The like may be said of Christ concerning all that are his; They are so much in the heart of Christ that he dyed for them, and now that he is raised from the dead, they are so much on his heart that he will live with them for evermore. The Church of Christ is more upon the heart of Christ than the Church of *Corinth* was upon *Pauls* heart. Now if the Saints had such a Room in *Pauls* heart, that it was in his heart to live and dye with them, then how much are all the Saints upon the heart of Christ. What the Lord saith of *Solomons* Temple, *2 Chron. 7. 16. Mine Eyes and mine Heart shall be there perpetually.* The same is true of all Christians that are the Temple of God. *2 Cor. 6. 16. Ye are the Temple of the Living God.* The eyes of the Lord and the heart of the Lord shall be upon them perpetually. Christs bearing us upon his heart is set forth by his carrying his Lambs in his Bosom. *Isa. 40. 11. He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall*

shall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom. It is not said, he shall put them but he shall carry them in his Bosom, intimating that not only strong Christians, but the weakest and most feeble, and shiftless are always born upon his heart. And in doing this he fulfills his Peoples Prayers, for they desire to be set as a Seal upon the heart of Christ *Cant. 8. 8. Set me as a Seal upon thine heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm.* The Seal makes and leaves an impression upon the Wax, and all the cuts and engravings on the Seal are imprinted on the Wax, 'tis as if the Spouse should have said, carry me upon thy heart as men use to carry Seals which they are very chary of, and that there be deep and abiding impressions of all my troubles graven upon thy heart, set me as a Seal upon thine Arm, that is manifest the love of thine heart by thy actings towards me and for me, put forth thy power to help me in all my troubles. The Apostle had great confidence that God would give preserving grace to the *Philippians*, because they were much in his heart to pray for them every time he went to the Throne of Grace. *Phil. 1. 4, 6, 7. Always in every Prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it untill the day of Jesus Christ; even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart.* If the Apostle Paul had such confidence

dence of the *Philippians* welfare, because he had them in his heart, what confidence may we have in all our troubles, from Christs having us in his heart, and bearing us upon his heart continually, and ever living to make intercession for us.

(2) Our Lord Jesus Christ in his intercession represents to his Father our troubles and dangers that we are exposed to while we are in the World, and our shiftless condition, and the hatred we meet with from the World, and prays his Father to keep us by his divine power, he prays not that we should be taken out of the World while we have service to do in the World, but that we may be kept from the evils, we are liable to in the World. *Joh. 17. 9. 11, 14, 15.* Where observe

1. The Persons for whom Christ intercedeth, and they are all that are his; *ver. 9. 10. I pray for them: I pray not for the World, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine.*

2. He represents to his Father, the dangers they are in by being in the World, where they are hated, and want his presence with them. *ver. 11. 14. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world — I have given them thy Word, and the world hath hated them.*

3. He commits them to his Fathers care, and prays him to keep them by his divine power. *ver. 11. Holy Father, keep through*

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thine own Name, those whom thou hast given me. That which he mainly prayed for, was not that they should be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. *ver. 15. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the World, but keep them from the evil.*

4. The Arguments he useth in Prayer, they are all mine, and all thine, and they glorifie me. *ver. 10. All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

5. This Prayer of Christ for his, wherein he hath prayed to his Father to keep them in his name, whilst they are in this world was recorded on purpose to comfort our hearts under our troubles. *ver. 13. These things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.* And this Prayer of Christ was made not only for his Disciples, that were then living, but for all, that should afterward believe on him to the end of the World. *ver. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word.* And what Christ prayed for, God will assuredly grant. *Joh. 11. 42. I know that thou hearest me always.*

Obj. But how is the intercession of Christ a ground of comfort against the troubles of the world, when notwithstanding the Prayer of Christ, that they, that are his, may be kept from the evil, they fall into as many and as great troubles as other men?

A. 1. Many troubles and afflictions are kept off, at the intercession of Christ, from those that are his; For such is the malice of Satan and wicked men against the Saints, that they would do them an hundred fold more mischief than they do, if God should not restrain them, *Pf. 124. 2. 3, 4, 5. Laban would have done Jacob much hurt; but God would not suffer him to hurt him. Gen. 31. 7. Your Father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, but God suffered him not to hurt me. The Israelites when few in number, when they went up and down from one place and one Kingdom to another, were liable to many injuries, but God prevented the malice of their adversaries. Psal. 103. 14. He suffered no man to do them wrong.*

2. When God doth not keep off troubles and afflictions from the Members of Christ, which is not absolutely prayed for, God at the intercession of Christ keeps off the evil of trouble from the members of Christ. The evil of trouble is, when troubles make us sin against God, and forsake the ways of God. *Mat. 13. 21. When Tribulation or Persecution ariseth because of thy word, by and by he is offended, that is, falleth away as another Evangelist expresseth it. 2 King. 6. 33. Behold this evil is of the Lord; why should I wait for the Lord any longer.* The evil of troubles is when men fret, and curse, and blaspheme the name of God because of their troubles; as *Isa. 8. 21.*

Rev. 16. 10. 11. Now the Members of Christ are kept from these evils under their troubles.

3. At the intercession of Christ the nature of troubles and afflictions are changed, they are not evils but good things to the People of God. *Psal. 119. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

4. At the intercession of Christ they that are Christs are upheld under their troubles, and kept from fainting. *Keep through thine own name those, whom thou hast given me.* Though we be not kept from trouble, yet Christs Prayer is answered, if we be kept by the power of God in our troubles, kept from falling, kept from fainting. Now God, for Christs sake, keeps his people from falling and fainting under their troubles. *Psal. 94. 18. When I said, my Foot slippeth : thy Mercy, O Lord, held me up. Psal. 116. 8. Thou hast delivered my feet from falling — Psal. 118. 13. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall : but the Lord helped me.*

(3.) The intercession of Christ is a ground of comfort under all our troubles, because he interceedeth with his Father, that the Spirit, the comforter, may be sent down into our hearts, to abide with us for ever. *Joh. 14. 1. 16, 17. Let not your heart be troubled — I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even*

even the Spirit of Truth. The Lord Jesus foreseeing that his Disciples would meet with many Tribulations, that their hearts might not be troubled, proposeth many grounds of comfort to them, among others this is a principal one, that he would interceed with his Father to give them his holy Spirit to be their Comforter, to make his abode with them for ever. But some may say, though the Spirit, the Comforter, be sent down into our hearts to abide with us for ever, yet many of the Servants of Christ that have the comforter, want the comforts of the Spirit in their troubles.

Q. What shall we do that we may get the comforts of the Spirit in our afflictions.

A. 1. Walk in the fear of God, both before trouble comes, and when you walk in the midst of trouble. for such as walk in the fear of God, enjoy the comforts of the holy Ghost. *Act. 9. 31. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.*

2. Give your selves to prayer in the day of trouble. *Joh. 16. 24. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* Christ told his Disciples, *ver. 20.* That they should weep, and lament, and be sorrowful, but their sorrow should be turned into joy, and here he directs them the way to get comfort under their sorrows, which was by Prayer, *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

3. Call to mind, apply, and meditate upon the gracious promises of God. The Spirit

comforts us by and through the word, and more especially by the promises. It was through the word that David had the Spirits comforts in his affliction. *Psal. 119. 49, 50. Remember thy word unto thy Servant, wherein thou hast caused me to hope this is my comfort in mine affliction.* So also the Prophet Jeremiah had the comforts of the Spirit through the word. *Jer. 15. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and the rejoycing of my heart.*

4. Keep up, and act your Faith in God through Christ in all your troubles, for trustings in God brings the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost into our hearts. *Psal. 13. 5. I have trusted in thy Mercy, my heart shall rejoyce in thy Salvation.* In the 3d. verse he complained of his sorrows, that he had sorrows in his heart dayly, but having strengthened his Faith by the consideration of the mercy of God, he concluded that God would put joy and gladness into his heart. *My heart shall rejoyce — Rom. 15. 13. The God of Peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing — There is joy, all joy, a fulness of all joy comes in by believing.*

(4.) The intercession of Christ is a ground of comfort against the troubles of the world, because it is our security that they shall not cause our Faith to fail. *Luk. 22. 31, 32. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat :*

Wheat : but I have prayed for thee, that thy Faith fail not. — Peter was greatly affrighted at the sufferings of Christ. The fear of the Cross made him fall in a dreadful manner, three times he denyed his Master, and cursed, and swore that he did not know the man. But though he was grievously foiled, yet by the Prayer of Christ his Faith was supported that it did not fail. Not only our Flesh and our Hearts would fail, but our Faith also, if it were not preserved by the intercession of Jesus Christ.

§ All troubles are sanctified to those that are Christs. This is a ground of great Consolation.

III. All troubles and afflictions, whatsoever befall those that are Christs, are sanctified to them, and shall work together for their good, and this is a ground of comfort under all the troubles of this World, that they shall be sanctified to us, and work for our good. Jesus Christ is made, of God, Sanctification to all such as are in him. 1 Cor. 1. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption.* When Christ is said to be made of God, sanctification to such as are in him, the meaning is, that he is appointed by God to sanctifie our persons and our conditions. Our Lord Jesus hath taken the curse from our Crosses, and turned them into Blessings. So that

we are not now to look upon our corrections, as our misery; but rather as conducing to our happiness. *Job. 5. 17. Behold happy is the man whom God correcteth.* That all our afflictions are sanctified by Jesus Christ appeareth thus, because none of them shall do us hurt, but they shall all work together for our good. *Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* There is a threefold good which is wrought for us by our afflictions.

1. They purge out our sins. *Isa. 27. 9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their sin.* And this is greatly for our good to be purged from our sins, which are the chiefest of evils.

2. They promote and increase the graces of the Spirit of God in our hearts, and make us partakers of his Holiness, and that is much for our profit to be made more Holy. *Heb. 12. 10. They verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holiness.*

3. They encrease our glory in the world to come for ever. *2 Cor. 4. 17. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory.* Now the knowledge of this, that all our afflictions are sent to do us good, and that they shall all work together for our good, is a ground of

of great comfort under all our troubles. *Rom. 5. 3, 4. VVe glory in Tribulations also, knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience; and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope.* Upon this account the Apostle *James* exhorteth us to count it joy, yea all joy when we fall into divers temptations, because we know that our Tryals shall work patience in us. *Jam. 1. 2, 3. My Brethren count it all joy when ye fall into divers Temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your Faith worketh Patience.* Now if this single benefit, the encreasing of our Patience, be such a ground of joy, how may it encrease our joy, when we consider that not only Patience, but our other graces also, and not our graces but our glory in Heaven shall be augmented for ever, by our momentary afflictions which we go through in this World. The Apostle writing to the *Hebrews* encourageth to chearfulness in their sufferings, because they were for their profit. *Heb. 12. 10, 11. He chasteneth us for our profit — Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.* Though a man was in a dejected condition, with hands hanging down, and in a fainting condition, his knees waxing feeble under his burdens, yet the consideration that he is chastened for his profit may revive him, and make him lift up his hands that hang down, and strengthen his feeble knees.

✓ S. The Lord Jesus will not leave us comfortless in our troubles. How Christ comforts his people.

✓ IV. Though we meet with many troubles in the World, this may chear our hearts under all of them, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised, he will not leave us comfortless in our troubles, but he will give us peace and comfort in himself, and from himself when we meet with troubles in the World. *Joh. 14. 18. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Joh. 16. 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace, in the world ye shall have Tribulation. Isa. 66. 13. As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.* The Affections of a Mother are very great and tender towards her Child, especially towards her sick and afflicted Child, she will spare no pains, no cost for that which may comfort her sick Child. The affections of a Nurse are great. *1 Thes. 2. 7, 8.* But of a Mother far greater. Now as readily, as affectionately as a Mother comforts her afflicted Child, so hath the Lord promised to comfort his afflicted people. *And ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.* That is to be observed, for this Prophet had foretold great judgments and desolations should come upon Jerusalem. As *Isa. 3. 8. Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen. Isa. 24. 3, 11. The Land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled.* All
joy

joy is darkned, and the mirth of the Land is gone. *Isa. 64. 10. Thy Holy Cities are a Wilderness, Zion is a Wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.* Yet though these Ruines and Desolations were coming upon Jerusalem, that the Land should be utterly spoiled, all joy be darkned, and the mirth of the Land quite gone; yet the Lord promiseth to comfort his people in Jerusalem. We that have such promises, may rest upon God, that for Christs sake he will comfort us in all our tribulations. *Micb. 7. 8. When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.* Afflictions and troubles are set out by the name of darkness. *Isa. 45. 7.* Joy and Comfort are expressed by the name of light, *Psal. 97. 11.* So that the meaning is, when I am in trouble and distress, the Lord shall give me comfort. *Pf. 38. 7. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.*

Obj. But do we not see, that notwithstanding these promises, and the confidences of the people of God, that God will comfort them in their afflictions; yet they are oft times under very great sorrows and heaviness.

A. 1. The people of God have Flesh, as well as Spirit; though the Spirit be willing to love the cross, the Flesh is weak, though the Spirit rejoiceth in God, the Flesh feeling the smart of the Rod, mourns.

2. Their

2. Their sorrows do not last alwayes, but are soon turned into joy. *Jab. 16. 20. Ye shall weep and lament—but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* Christ doth not promise his Disciples, that they shall have no sorrows, no cause of weeping; but this he promiseth, that they shall not be left comfortless under their sorrows, for their sorrow shall be turned into joy. *Psal. 30. 5, 11. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.*

3. Even while the people of God are mourning, they are sowing the seeds of joy and comfort, and shall doubtless reap the fruit of their sorrows in more abundant consolations. *Pf. 126. 5, 6. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoyceing, bringing his sheaves with him.* There is much more reaped than was sown: A little quantity of seed yields whole Cart-loads of Corn.

To open this more fully, of Christs promising not to leave his people comfortless in their troubles: I will shew you several wayes, whereby Christ comforts his Members, and gives them peace under their greatest troubles.

1. By shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which he gives unto them. *Rom. 5. 3, 5. We glory in tribulation—because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given*

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unto us. By shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, understand the manifesting of Gods love to our souls; the giving us the knowledge and understanding of the love of God, which doth wonderfully affect the heart with joy and gladness. *Psal. 42. 7, 8. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me, yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night, his Song shall be with me.* Two things are here worthy of our observation.

1. *David* did believe, that in his greatest distresses, when all Gods waves and billows went over him, God would express and manifest his love to him—yet *the Lord will command his loving kindness.* The commanding his loving kindness, implyeth the powerful expressions of his love. *Where the word of a King is, there is power. Eccl. 8. 4.* And the abiding impressions of his love. *Pf. 33. 9. He commanded, and it stood fast.* And the speedy manifestation of his love. For when God gives a command to things to be done, it implyeth speed. *Pf. 147. 15. He sendeth forth his Commandment upon the Earth, his word runneth very swiftly.*

2. *David* did believe that the manifestation of the love of God would be such a comfort to him, that it would make his heart to sing for joy in his greatest distresses; yet the Lord shall command his loving kindness, and in the night his song shall be with me.

2. Jesus

2. Jesus Christ comforts and refresheth his Members in their troubles, by those gracious visits which he gives them in their afflictions. *Job 10. 12. Thy visitation hath preserved my Spirit. John 16. 22. And ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you.* A visit from a good man is very comfortable in a day of trouble. *2 Cor. 7. 5, 6. Our flesh had no rest, we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God that comforteth them that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.* If a visit from a good man be so refreshing, that it will comfort us when we are troubled on every side, when we have fightings without, and fears within, then how comfortable is a visit from Christ in the day of trouble. But how doth Christ visit his afflicted people? what are those visits of Christ, which he gives his people in their affliction.

A. 1. Christ visiteth his people with his word, by bringing suitable and encouraging promises to them in a day of distress. *Lam. 3. 54, 57. Waters flowed over mine head, then I said I am cut off—Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee, thou saidest, fear not.* Thus the Lord visited Abraham with a suitable word of promise. *Gen. 15. 1. After these things the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a Vision, saying, Fear not Abraham, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* And these are
sweet

sweet visits which do greatly rejoyce the heart: *Psal. 119. 162. I rejoyce at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.*

2. Jesus Christ visiteth his people in their afflictions, by his Spirit, the teachings, the revivings, the supports of his Spirit. *Cant. 2. 6. His left hand is under my head, his right hand doth embrace me. Isa. 41. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee— I will strengthen thee, I will uphold thee. Isa. 57. 15. I dwell with him that is of a contrite and an humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*

3. The Lord Jesus visits his afflicted people when he answers their Prayers, and fulfils his own promises. *Gen. 21. 1. And the Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as he had spoken.*

4. The Lord visits his afflicted people, when he raiseth up deliverance for them out of their troubles. *Psal. 106. 4. O visit me with thy Salvation.* And such visits when God saves his people out of their troubles cause great joy. *Psal. 21. 1. The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy Salvation how greatly shall he rejoyce?*

3. As Christ comforts his afflicted people by the gracious visits which he gives them, so also by raising and strengthening their Faith in times of trouble, and causing them to stay themselves upon God in an evil day: For the staying the mind upon God is a means to keep the

the Soul in peace under the greatest dangers.

• *Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.*

4. Jesus Christ comforteth his afflicted people with the hope of Eternal Life, which he promiseth to such as are in a suffering condition, if they continue faithful to the death. *Rev. 2. 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. 2 Tim. 2. 12. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. Rom. 5. 2. And rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

Use I. If an interest in Christ be such a ground of Consolation, then here is reproof.

(1.) For those that content themselves with a Worldly Interest, and take no care no pains to get an interest in Christ, but neglect Christ. Such mens case is sad, For

1. The world is a poor portion, for all worldly enjoyments abstracted from God and Christ are nothing but vanity and vexation of Spirit.

2. All the world will avail a man nothing when he comes to dye. It will give no ease to a troubled Conscience, no pardon of Sin, no help to Heaven. *1 Tim. 6. 7. We can carry nothing of it away with us into another world.*

3. They that have neglected Christ and the Salvation purchased by Christ, shall not escape the wrath of God in the other World. *Heb. 2. 3.*

(2.) For

(2.) For those that have an interest in Christ, and yet live very discontentedly; either for want of some things which they desire, as Parts, Riches, Friends, a settled Condition, or for the loss of some things; which God hath taken away from them, or because of some crosses or troubles that they meet with in the World.

Use II. Of Examination, Have we a true saving interest in Christ? can we say Christ is ours and we are his?

Quest. How may we know, whither Christ be ours?

A. 1. If we love him. *Cant. 2. 16. My Beloved is mine*; and if our love to him exceed our love to all other things, and persons in the World, if he be our best Beloved. Christ doth not own those as having an interest in him, that love any thing above him. *Mat. 10. 37. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* That such as love God and Christ above all things, have a saving interest in Christ, is evident, because eternal Life is promised to them. *Jam. 2. 5. Heirs of the Kingdom which God hath promised to those that love him.*

Quest. How shall we know that we love Christ above all things?

A. 1. When we desire Christ above all things

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✓ things in the world. *Psal.* 73. 25. So that if God should ask us, as he did *Solomon*, what shall I give thee? we would say, Lord; give us thy self for our God, and thy Son for our Saviour.

2. When we esteem Christ above all things, so as that we count them as dung, in comparison of Christ, and are willing to part with any thing, so that we may win Christ. *Philip.* 3. 8.

✓ 3. VWhen the love of God in Christ puts more joy and gladness into our hearts, than the enjoyment of all the world; or, it would be a greater joy to us, than the whole world; if God would manifest his love to us. *Psal.* 4. 6, 7.

(2.) If we are Christs, then Christ is ours; that's another Character in the Text. *Cant.* 2. 16. *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* Now we may know we are Christs.

1. If we have solemnly given up our selves to Christ, with a sincere heart, without any secret reserves of any Lust, resolving that by the help of his grace we will deny our selves, take up our Cross, and follow him. *2 Cor.* 8. 5. *Mark* 8. 34.

2. If his interest will prevail with us beyond our own interest, and his will above our own wills; if his word be our rule, and his glory our end, that is a good evidence that we are Christs. *Isa.* 63. 19. *We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them.* As much as to say, they are the Lords, over whom the Lord bears

bears rule. *Psal.* 119. 94. *I am thine — I have sought thy precepts.* When in doubtful Cases we seek out the will of Christ, and follow the will of Christ, that shews us to be his.

3. When we are Christs Servants. *Act.* 27. 23. *Whose I am, and whom I serve.* And the great end why we desire to live, is to do service for Christ. *Phil.* 1. 21.

4. When we are tender and careful of Christs glory. *John* 17. 10. *I am glorified in them that are mine and thine.*

(3.) The Spirit of Christ sent down into our Hearts, is a certain Evidence of an interest in Christ. *1 John* 3. 24. *Hereby we know, that he abideth in us, by the Spirit that he hath given us.* *Rom.* 8. v. 9.

Q. How shall we know that we have the Spirit of Christ?

A. 1. If we have an obediential frame of heart. *Ezek* 36. 27. compared with *Rom.* 8. 7. The carnal heart is enmity to the Law of God, and therefore when we are caused to obey Gods Statutes, that is from the Spirit put within us.

2. We may know we have the Spirit, by the fruits of the Spirit, which are Faith, Love, Peace, Joy, Long-suffering, &c. *Gal.* 5. 22, 23, &c.

Use. III. Of Exhortation.

Exhort. 1. To such as want an interest in Christ, that they would above all things seek

to get Christ. What *Solomon* saith of *Wisdom*. *Prov.* 4. 7. The same may I say of *Jesus Christ*, who is called the *Wisdom of God*. *Jesus Christ* is the principal thing, therefore above all things, get *Jesus Christ*.

Exhort. 2. To such as have an interest in *Christ*, to labour for the knowledge of it, that every one may be able to say, *Christ* is mine, and I am his.

Q. How shall we attain to the knowledge of our interest in *Christ*?

A. 1. Examine your selves by those Characters the Scripture gives of an interest in *Christ*, and more particularly about your Faith. *2 Cor.* 13. 5. And if you cannot make any clear work hereof at one time, try what you can do at another.

2. Pray earnestly to *God*, to manifest your interest in *Christ*. It is in his light that we see light. *Psal.* 36. 9. Pray as *David*, *Psal.* 35. 3. Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation. And if you can't obtain the knowledge of your interest in *Christ*, by much seeking to *God*, yet follow on to seek him, and then in *Gods* good time, you shall know the *Lord* to be your *God* in *Christ*. *Hos* 6. 3. *Isa.* 24. 9. *Zech.* 13. 9.

3. Accustom your self to trust in *God* in all your straits, fears, dangers, and temptations. For the more you trust in *God*, the sooner you shall come to the knowledge of your interest

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in God *Psal.* 16. 1, 2. [*In thee do I put my trust*] O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, [*thou art my Lord*] *Psal.* 31. 14. But I trusted in thee, O Lord, I said thou art my God.

4. Learn to deny your selves for Christ: for the more you are exercised in self-denial, the sooner you shall attain to know your interest in Christ. After *Abraham* had denied himself of taking a reward from the King of *Sodom*, God came to him with a promise, to assure him of his interest in God. *Gen.* 15. 1. After these things the word of the Lord came unto *Abraham* in a Vision, saying, Fear not *Abraham*, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

5. Set your love upon Christ. The Spouse finding in her heart an ardent love to Christ, could say, *Cant.* 2. 16. *My Beloved is mine.* To such as love Christ, there is a promise, that he will manifest himself to their Souls. *John* 14. 21.

6. Labour to order your Conversation right, and to live righteously and holily. *Psal.* 50. 23. *Isa.* 32. 17.

7. Attend frequently that sealing ordinance of the Lords upper; the neglect or careless use whereof, is the reason so few Christians attain to assurance of their interest in Christ.

Exhort. 3. Learn how to fetch comfort from Christ in all troubles. How to retain the knowledge of your interest in Christ. What you should do, that can't make out

your interest in Christ in a day of trouble, and at an hour of death.

I have shewn that there is comfort to be had in Christ, for such as have an interest in him, not only under outward, but also under Soul troubles. Now I shall conclude this discourse; with the resolution of three questions.

1. How may we fetch comfort from Christ in all our troubles.

2. How may such as have attained the knowledge of their interest in Christ, retain the same.

3. VVhat shall they do, that want the knowledge of their interest in Christ.

Sett. 1. How may we fetch comfort from Christ in all our troubles, both inward and outward.

1. Get Acquaintance with Christ, and those benefits we have by Christ. The more we have of the knowledge of Christ, the more peace and comfort we shall have in our Souls. 2 *Pet.*

1. 2. *Grace and peace be multiplyed unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord.* As grace, so peace also is multiplyed, given abundantly through the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ. And as the knowledge of Christ tends much to the multiplying of peace and comfort, so also doth the knowledge of the benefits that we have by Christ, very much promote our comfort under all our troubles, as I might shew, by instantancing

standing in the several benefits we have by Christ, I will mention three or four.

(1.) By Christ we are reconciled to God, and have an attonement made for our Souls. *God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.* The knowledge of this attonement which Christ hath made for us, will fill our hearts with joy and gladness. *Rom. 5. 11. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the attonement.*

(2.) By Christ we have remission of all our sins. *Act. 13. 38, 39.* And the knowledge of remission of sins is a ground of joy in all troubles. *Matth. 9. 2. Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

(3.) By Christ, our persons and services are accepted of God, *Eph. 1. 6.* And the acceptance of our persons and services, may put great joy and gladness into our hearts. *Eccl. 9. 7. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works.*

(4.) By Jesus Christ, we have a perfect, and compleat righteousness. *Rom. 10. 4.* And this is matter of great joy. *Isa. 61. 10. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath cloathed me with the Garments of Salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.*

(5.) By Christ, we have boldness to hope for eternal life. *Heb. 10. 19.* And hope of eternal life, is a ground of great joy in all our troubles.

troubles. *Rom. 5. 2. We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

(6.) By Christ there is a new Covenant established, full of precious promises. And the knowledge of the Covenant layeth a foundation for peace and comfort in all troubles. *Psal. 25. 13, 14. His Soul shall dwell at ease — He will shew them his Covenant.* To be at ease, intimates a relief against all sorts of Malidies, for if there be any thing that disquiets the Soul, it is not at ease. Dwelling at ease, implyeth a permanency of Spiritual comforts. Now here comes the Soul to dwell at ease, when the outward man is exposed to variety of troubles? It is by being acquainted with the Covenant.

II. If you would fetch comfort from Christ under all troubles, get, and keep clear apprehensions of your interest in Christ, and in those benefits which he hath purchased with his blood. Darknes and doubts about our interest hinder our comfort, but when we know Christ to be ours, our Saviour, and our Redeemer; this will make our Souls greatly to rejoyce under all our troubles. *Luk. 1. 47. My Spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour. 1 Sam. 30. 6. David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him — But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Ps. 27. 1. The Lord is my light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid.*

3. Keep

III. Keep in remembrance, and meditate on the benefits you have by Christ, as Reconciliation with God, Remission of sins, Adoption, Sanctification, Eternal life, &c. For those things that are forgotten, and out of mind, yield no comfort to us. It is the remembrance and meditating on Christ, and the benefits of Christ, that brings in sweetness, and Soul-satisfying comforts. *Pf. 104. 34. My meditation of him shall be sweet. Pf. 63. 5, 6. My Soul shall be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Pf. 94. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.*

IV. In all your troubles, both inward and outward, keep up your Faith in Christ, and in God, through Christ. Trust in God, that for Christs sake, he will give you all the blessings purchased with the blood of Christ, and promised in the new Covenant. For this is the way to keep your hearts from being troubled, and to fill your Souls with peace and joy. *Rom. 15. 13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing. Isa. 26. 3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. 1 Pet. 1. 8. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. John 14. 1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Upon hearing this Exhortation,

on, let not your hearts be troubled, the Disciples might have replied, Lord, hast thou not told us that in the world we shall have tribulation, that we shall be hated of all men, for thy names sake, and that we shall be cast out of the Synagogue, and that men shall lay hands on us, and put us into Prisons; and we shall be brought before Kings and Rulers, and that men will think, they do God good service, when they kill us: How shall we keep our hearts from being troubled, when all these troubles come upon us? As a remedy against their hearts being troubled; he bids them believe on God, and on himself. *Believe on God, believe also on me.*

V. In all your distresses, give your selves to Prayer, for that is the way to be filled with comforts, and to have your sorrows turned into joy. *John 16. 20, 24. Verily, Verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep, and lament, but the world shall rejoyce, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* And what counsell and direction doth he give them, that their sorrow may be turned into joy? It is to give themselves unto Prayer. *Ask, and ye shall recieve, that your joy may be full.* The like direction the Apostle gives us for keeping our minds from all kind of troublesome cares, and for the obtaining that peace, which passeth all understanding, and that is, to give our selves to Prayer *Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication,*

cation with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

VI. Let the word of Christ dwell richly in your hearts, that you may have some suitable promises, to have recourse unto in all your troubles, for that will give you abiding peace, and strong Consolation in all your troubles. *Col. 3. 15, 16. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts*— But some may say, how shall we attain to this, to have the peace of God rule in our hearts? the following words shew this, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all Wisdom.* By the peace of God we may understand, not only that peace which God commands us to have one with another, but that peace which God gives in our own hearts and Consciences, as it is taken. *Phil. 4. 7.* Then the peace of God rules in our hearts, when it keeps our hearts quiet, under all troubles, so as no troubles are able to disturb and break our peace. Now the way to attain to this is, to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all Wisdom. Then the word of Christ dwells with us, when it abides in our hearts, we are acquainted with it, and we converse daily with it, as we do with those that dwell in the same house with us. Then it dwells in us richly, when we are well stored with the promises of the word, when we have promises suitable to every condition, and every trouble that

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we pass through. Then it dwells with us in all Wisdom, when we have the right understanding of the word, and know how to make use of it upon all occasions, as we stand in need of it. It was by the word that *David* found comfort in all his afflictions. *Psal. 119 49, 50. Remember thy word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It was also from the word of God, that *Jeremiah* had his comforts under his greatest sorrows, when he complained that his pain was perpetual, and his wound incurable. *Jer. 15. 16. Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoycing of mine heart.* And that it was a time of great distress with the Prophet, when Gods word was the joy and rejoycing of his heart, is evident from *ver. 18. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, that refuseth to be healed.*

VII. Walk in the fear of God, and hold fast your integrity in all your troubles, and then you shall have the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and the light of Consolation shall arise upon you in the darkest days. *Act. 9. 31. Walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Psal. 112. 4. Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in Darkness.* Though you suffer for Righteousness sake, yet love Righteousnes and hate Iniquity, and in so doing, the Lord will anoint you with the Oyl of joy and gladness. *Psal. 45. 7. Thou lovest Righteousness, and hatest Wickedness, therefore*

therefore God, thy God hath anointed thee with the Oyl of gladness above thy fellows.

VII. When by your sins and backslidings you have lost your comforts, humble your Souls for your sins, and the Lord will restore your lost comforts. *Isa. 57. 18. I will restore comforts to him, and to his Mourners. Mat. 5. 4. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

IX. Keep up the belief and perswasion of Gods Love to your Souls through Christ, notwithstanding all the troubles that come upon your inward or outward man, for the apprehension of Gods love will fill your hearts with joy and gladness, and be a ground of everlasting Joy to your Souls. *Act 2. 28. Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 2 Thes. 2. 16. God even our Father which hath loved us and given us everlasting Consolation. Joh 13. 1. Jesus loves his own, and that to the end, even whilst in a sinful and troublesome world. The knowledge of the love of God in Christ, causeth abiding joy, and fulness of joy. Joh. 15. 9, 11. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you—These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Seet. 2. How may such as have gotten the knowledge of their interest in Christ, retain the knowledge and perswasion of their interest in Christ.

It is of great use in the Life of Faith, and the promoting our Spiritual comfort, not only to get the knowledge of our interest in Christ, and his saving benefits, but also to retain this knowledge. And because this is not easily done, I shall lay down some helps there-to.

§. What are good grounds to lay claim to an interest in Christ.

I. Understand, and be clear in your grounds, on which you lay claim to an interest in Christ, and Salvation by Christ, and see that they be solid, consonant to the Scriptures, and such as will hold and abide in an hour of temptation. And if you ask, what are good and sure grounds for claiming an interest in Christ? I answer.

1. The free and general offer of Christ and Salvation by Christ, made in the Gospel to every one, that is willing to receive. *Rev. 22. 17. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

2. The testimony of our own Consciences, that we do willingly, cordially, and thankfully accept of Christ, as God offers him to us in the Gospel; Our Consciences know what actings there are in our Souls, towards God and Christ, whether we chuse the Lord for our God and Portion, and whether we accept of Christ for our Saviour and Redeemer, or whether we refuse and reject him.

Psal.

Pfal. 16. 2. O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my God. Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion saith my Soul— Now this Testimony of our Consciences, that we do accept of Christ on the terms of the Gospel, to be ruled and saved by him, in his own way, is a good ground of comfort, and may embolden us to hope that God doth accept us in Christ. *2 Cor. 1. 12. Our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience. 1 Joh 3. 21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.* When I speak of the Testimony of Conscience witnessing our accepting of Christ on the terms of the Gospel, understand it of a Conscience enlightened by the word and Spirit, with the knowledge of Christ. (*2 Tim. 1. 12. I know whom I have believed*) and the knowledge of the terms on which God offers Salvation by Christ, for if we know not the terms on which Christ is offered to us, how can our Consciences witness to us, that we do close with the terms of the Gospel.

3. The grant or promise of God in the Gospel to all that receive Christ, that he shall be theirs, and they shall be his. *Joh 1. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* Here is a priviledge granted and promised to all that do or shall receive Christ, how many soever they be, that they shall become the Sons of God, God will become

come their Father in Christ, and will own them for his children. *Joh. 6. 37. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast him out.* In this promise is implied, that such as on the call of the Gospel close with Christ, he will bestow himself, and all his benefits on them for theirs, and he will own them for his.

4. Our finding in our selves, those marks or characters, which the Scriptures give of such as have a saving interest in Christ, which will evidence to us, that we have rightly received or closed with Christ. As namely our having the Spirit of Christ given to us. 1 *Joh. 4. 13. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* Our loving and preserving Christ above all things. *Cant. 2. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his.* But of these Scripture characters I have spoken before.

§. Christ becomes theirs by covenant that accept of him. How conduceth this to our comfort?

2. If you would hold the perswasion of your interest in Christ, as you must look to your grounds on which you lay claim to an interest in Christ, so also it will be of great use to you to understand the nature of that covenant which Christ maketh with you, when you come to him and accept of him on the terms of the Gospel. The Lord Jesus takes

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all those that come to him upon the call and invitation of the Gospel, into an everlasting covenant. *Isa. 55. 1, 3. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters — Incline your ear, and come unto me—And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* Concerning this covenant which the Lord maketh with those that come to Christ, we may observe these three or four things.

1. This covenant is to give us Christ himself, and all his saving benefits for ever, *I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David.* Christ the Son of David, is called by the name of David. *Hos. 3. 5. Ezek. 34. 24.* And so the sure mercies of David, are all those Mercies and Blessings which Jesus Christ hath purchased for us, and made sure to us by an everlasting covenant, 'tis as much as to say, I will enter covenant to give you my self, and all my benefits. That this covenant which Christ inters into, with those that come to him, is to give us an eternal interest in himself, and all his benefits. We may see *Hos. 2. 19, 20. I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in Righteousness, and in Judgment, and in Mercies, I will even betroth thee unto me in Faithfulness.* To open this Scripture consider.

1. What it is for the Lord to betroth us unto himself. It is to engage himself to us

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to be ours, and to take us for his.

2. For how long a time the Lord engageth himself to us, and that is for ever. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*

3. The manner how he will betroth us to himself; in Righteousness, in Judgment, in Mercies, in Faithfulness. It is a most sure contract, made out of infinite mercy, and managed with Wisdom, and Judgment, and shall be Righteously and Faithfully observed.

4. The persons that the Lord will betroth to himself, are those who are willing to be divorced from their sins, and to accept of Christ for their Husband—*ver. 7. 19. I will go and return to my first Husband—I will betroth thee to me—* They whom God taketh into Covenant with himself. *ver. 18. 19. I will make a Covenant for them—And I will betroth thee to me for ever.* And 'tis also to be observed, that the Lord repeats this three times—*I will betroth thee, yea I will betroth thee, I will even betroth thee unto me,* that we may rest satisfied that our former sins though great, shall not hinder us on our Repentance, from this great privilege of being betrothed to the Lord for ever. That the covenant is to give a mutual and eternal interest, that is, that the Lord will be ours for ever, and take us for his for ever, you may see. *Ezek. 36. 28. I shall be my people, and I will be your God. Psal. 48. 14. This God is our God for ever and for ever Lam. 3. 31. The Lord will not cast off for ever.*

1 Sam.

1 Sam. 12. 22. *The Lord will not forsake his People, for his great names sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.*

2. This Covenant which the Lord Jesus Christ maketh with us upon our coming to him, wherein he engageth to be ours, and to take us for his for ever, is a sure, and everlasting covenant; 2 Sam. 23. 5. *More firm and stedfast than the Hills and Mountains, which shall all be removed out of their places, sooner than Gods covenant shall be removed from us. Isa. 54. 10. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my peace be removed saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.*

3. The failings and back-slidings of the Members of Christ, shall not make void this everlasting covenant, he will chasten them for their sins and backslidings, but he will not break his covenant with them. Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. *If his Children forsake my Law; and walk not in my judgments, if they break my Statutes and keep not my Commandments; then will I visit their Transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips.*

+ §. No doubts, about our Spiritual estate, to be indulged, or admitted, but upon Scripture grounds.

✓ 3. After you have closed with Christ, and God hath cleared up to your Souls your interest in Christ, by his Word and Spirit, admit no doubts about your interest in Christ, but upon Scripture grounds. Satan labours what he can, to keep us in a doubting condition, all our dayes; because doubts of this nature, hinder our comfort, weaken our faith, and are impediments to our glorifying God: And therefore after clearest evidences of our interest in Christ, he will be thrusting doubts into our minds, whether we be Christs, yea, or no; that he may puzzle us herein as long as we live. After our Lord Jesus Christ had it witnessed to him from Heaven, that he was the Son of God. *Matth. 3. 17. And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The Devil tempted him twice with doubts about his Sonship. *Matth. 4. 3, 6. If thou be the Son of God — if thou be the Son of God.* Now if Satan adventured to suggest doubts to our Lord Jesus Christ, after he had his Sonship witnessed in an extraordinary manner, even by his Fathers voice, speaking from Heaven to him, it is no marvail if he be often suggesting doubts to us about our interest in Christ, after clearest manifestations thereof. Wherefore it will be our wisdom to examine all our doubts, to see whether there be real grounds from the Holy

Holy Scriptures for such doubts, and if there be not, then to reject them as the suggestions of Satan, and the sinful fruit of our own unbelieving, mistrustful hearts. As Christ said to *Peter, Matth. 14. 31. O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* So should we say to our own hearts, when doubts arise in our hearts; wherefore do I doubt? Have I cause from the word of God, to question my interest in Christ, because of this, or that, which is suggested to me? If not, reject those doubts as causeless, and as proceeding from Satan.

§. Interest in Christ is consistent with great imperfections, sore afflictions, dreadful temptations, conflicts between the Flesh and Spirit, want of influences, successlessness in Holy Duties, and the hideings of Gods face.

4. It is of great use to the holding fast the persuasion of our interest in Christ, to have a right understanding of the State and Condition of a Christian in this present evil world. A man may be united unto Christ, and have a saving interest in him, and yet be sensible of many and great imperfections, and be exercised with sharp afflictions, and dreadful temptations; he may feel a law in his Members, warring against the law of his mind, and find great conflicts between the Flesh, and the Spirit; he may feel great dryness, and want of Spiritual influences, and be under the hideings of Gods face, and meet with other exercises of his Faith, and notwithstanding all these things.

things, he may be Christs, and Christ may be his. As I shall shew by instanceing in the several particulars.

1. A man may be sensible of much imperfection in himself, he may find very great defects in his best duties, and yet be one that hath a saving interest in Christ, God may be his Father, and he may be one of Gods Children. *Isa. 64. 6, 8. We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. But now O Lord, thou art our Father. There are Babes in Christ, as well as young Men and Fathers, and they that are but Babes in Christ, are so full of imperfections, that in some things they seem more like to carnal men, than Spiritual: 1 Cor. 3. 1. And I brethren could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ, yet these Babes in Christ, that had much carnality in them, were truly interested in Christ, as we may see, ver. 23. ye are Christs.*

2. A man may be exercised with sharp and fore afflictions, such as may melt, and break his heart, and yet have a saving interest in Christ. *Cant. 2. 2, 16. As a Lillie among Thorns, so is my love among the Daughters - My beloved is mine, and I am his. When the Spouse was a Lillie among Thorns, that is, compassed about with sharp afflictions, which did prick, and grieve her like Thorns, she was Christs Love, and Christ was hers, and she was his. When David was afflicted very much, and his troubles*

bles such, as melted his Soul, and broke his heart, he did not question his interest, because of his afflictions, but could and did own it, that he was the Lords. *Psal. 119. 28, 107. My Soul melteth for heaviness — I am afflicted very much — compared with ver. 94. I am thine, save me.*

10 A man may be exercised with horrid and dreadful temptations, and yet be one that hath an interest in Christ. The Apostle *Paul*, who was a chosen Vessel, and had an undoubted interest in Christ; was under the buffetings of Satan, which were as grievous to his Soul, as a Thorn is grievous to the Flesh. *2 Cor. 12. 7. There was given to me a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.* Our Lord Jesus himself, was tempted by Satan to great, and grievous sins, to get bread when he was hungry, to cast down himself from a Pinnacle of the Temple, which was in effect to have destroyed himself, and to fall down, and worship the Devil. And what worse sin than to worship the Devil? *Matth. 4. 6, 9.* Now if Satan adventured to tempt our Lord Jesus Christ to such horrid sins as these are; We need not wonder if he assault his Members with temptations to the worst of sins, as Blasphemy, Idolatry, Atheism, Self-Murder, and the like.

4. A man may have a saving interest in Christ, and yet feel in himself the indwelling corruption, which may incline him to that which is evil, and hinder him in doing that

good, which he desireth to do. He may feel the lustings of the Flesh, opposing the workings of the Spirit of Grace: He may feel the Law in his Members, warring against the Law of his Mind, and sometimes leading him Captive to the Law of Sin, and yet be one that is made a partaker of the saving benefits of Christ. We find the Apostle Paul uttering such complaints as these. *Sin dwelleth in me — The good that I would, that I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do — I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. I see another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my mind, and bringing me into Captivity, to the Law of sin which is in my Members. Rom. 7. 17, 19, 21, 23.* Yet at the same time that he uttered these complaints, he did look upon himself to be Christs, and did bless God for his interest in Christ, and the benefits he had by Christ, *ver. 25. I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The Galatians felt in themselves the lustings of the Flesh against the Spirit, whereby they were hindered in well-doing. *Gal. 5. 17. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Yet these Persons, that felt these conflicts between the Flesh and the Spirit, were the Children of God through Faith in Jesus Christ. *Gal. 3. 26. Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.*

5. A man may be sensible of much dryness, and be under a great want of the influences of the Spirit of Grace, and yet he may have a saving interest in Christ, and God may be his God and Father in Christ. *Psal. 119. 83, 94. I am become like a bottle in the smoke — I am thine, save me* — When the Psalmist found himself like a bottle in the smoke, that is in a withered, drie, parched condition, he did, notwithstanding his drie and withered condition, believe himself to be the Lords — *I am thine, save me*. So also *Psal. 32. 4, 7. My moisture is turned into the drought of Summer — Thou art my hiding place*. He did believe his interest in God, though he found himself in such a dry condition, that he complained his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer, that is, was so gone, as he could not discern any remaining in him. An example of believing God to be our Father, in, and through Christ, under a suspension of influencees, we have *Isa. 63. 15, 16. Where is thy zeal and thy strength, and the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me, are they restrained! Doubtless thou art our Father — Thou O Lord art our Father, our Redeemer*.

6. A man may be under the withdrawals of God, the Lord may hide his face from him, and though he seek the Lord, he may give no answers to his Prayers, and yet God may be his Father in Christ, and he may have a saving interest in Christ. *Isa. 64. 7, 8. Thou hast*

hast hid thy face from us—But now O Lord, thou art our Father. *Cant. 2. 16.* Compared with *Cant. 5. 6.* *My beloved is mine, and I am his—* I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone— I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but He gave me no answer.

7. A man may be successful in Holy Duties, he may not find what his Soul seeks after in Gods Ordinances, and yet Christ may be his, and he may be Christ's. *Cant. 2. 16.* Compared with *Cant. 3. 1.* *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* By night on my bed, I sought him whom my Soul loveth, I sought him, but I found him not. Here is earnestness, and continuance in seeking Christ, I sought him, I sought him, it's mentioned twice. Here is sincerity in seeking Christ, a seeking him out of love, and yet no success, but I found him not. *Isa. 49. 4.* *I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.* Here is labour in vain as to men, and a spending our strength for nought, and yet a claiming an interest in God.

8. A man that hath a saving interest in Christ, may be under various and different tempers, and frames of Spirit. He may have his Ups, and his Downs, sometimes his heart may be in a raised elevated frame, he may have such an high measure of Faith, as to fear nothing. *Isa. 12. 2.* *Behold God is my Salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid.* *Pf. 27. 1.*

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The Lord is my Light and Salvation, whom shall I fear! At another time the same person may be in a very low and dejected frame, that his Soul may as it were cleave to the dust. Ps. 119. 26. *My soul cleaveth to the Dust.* Psal. 42. 6. *O my God, my Soul is cast down within me.* At one time he may have sweet peace and comfort, Ps. 94. 19. *Thy comforts delight my Soul.* Another time he may be in a disturbed, disquieted frame, and go mourning all the day long. Ps. 42. 11. *Why art thou cast down O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted within me;* Ps. 38. 6. *I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* At one time he may be in a lively frame, and have earnest longings and breathings after God. Ps. 42. 1, 2. *As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God. My Soul thirsteth for God—* At another time he may be in a dead, dull, and stupid frame, Ps. 73. 22. *I was as a beast before thee.* Ps. 143. 3, 4. *He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead— My heart within me is desolate.* Ps. 102. 4. *My heart is smitten, and withered like grass.* At one time he may be in a melting broken frame, at another time in such an hardened frame, that he may wonder to see how hard his heart is. Isa. 63. 16, 17. *Doubtless thou art our Father— O Lord why hast thou made us to err from thy wayes, and hardened our hearts from thy fear.* At one time he may walk in the light of Gods

counte-

countenance. *Psal. 21. 6. Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.* At another time he may be under the hidings of Gods face, and that for so long a time, as to fear that God will never return to him again. *Pf. 13. 1. How long wilt thou forget me, (O Lord) for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?* Thus we see how the Children of God are liable to variety of changes in their Spiritual state, and in the frame of their hearts, only let this be added also, when ever their hearts are out of frame, they are unquiet and troubled, and can't be at rest till they get into a good frame again. *Psal. 30. 7. Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.*

9. A man may be in a very dark and distressed condition, and want the presence of God, and think himself forsaken of God, and yet be one that hath a saving interest in Christ. *Isa. 50. 10. Who is there among you that feareth the Lord—that walketh in darkness, and seeth no Light—let him stay himself upon his God.* The Lord is his God that heareth him, though he walk in darkness, and can't apprehend it. *Joh. 6. 17. It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.* They were Christs own Disciples that wanted Christs presence when they were at Sea, in a dark night, when there was a great Tempest that endangered their Lives. See also *Isa. 49. 14, 15, 16.*

§. It is a great help to hold in our interest in Christ, to commune often with our own hearts about our Spiritual estate.

§. Another help to the holding the perswasion of our interest in Christ, is to commune often with our own hearts, about our Spiritual state, and the grounds of our claiming an interest in Christ, and our performance of those terms which the Gospel proposeth in order to our enjoying the saving benefits of Christ, as namely whether we do indeed believe on him, and repent of our sins, and obey Christ as our Lord, and love and prefer him above all things, and deny our selves, and take up our Cross, and follow him. For

1. The oftner we search our selves, and commune with our own hearts, the clearer Knowledge we shall have of our Spiritual state.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith, know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you.* If we be doubtful

and desirous to know whether Christ be in us, the way to come unto this knowledge is to examine our selves, whether we be in the Faith.

What the Psalmist saith of Gods searching him; *Psal. 139. 1. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.* The same is true of searching our selves, by searching our selves we shall know our selves. As Solomon by communing with his own heart, grew in Wisdom and Experience. *Eccl. 1. 16. I communed with mine own heart—* Yea my heart had great Experience

of

of Wisdom and Knowledge; So shall we have great experience and knowledge of our hearts, if we do often commune with them.

2. While we are communing with our own hearts about our Spiritual Estate, it pleaseth the Lord oft times to draw War to us, and to illuminate our minds, and to evidence to us the Graces that are wrought in us. As it fared with the two Disciples. *Luk. 24. 15. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.* So it often comes to pass with the Children of God, whilst they are Communing and Reasoning with their own hearts, that Jesus Christ draws near to them with his Holy Spirit, and sealeth up Instruction to them. And as it was with *Moses*, when he turned aside to see and consider that great work of God, a Bush burning and not consumed; when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see the work of God, God spake to *Moses*, and revealed himself to him. *Exod. 3. 3, 4, 6.* So 'tis here, when we turn aside from our worldly affairs to commune with our own hearts, about the workings of Gods grace upon our Souls, he reveals and discovers to us our covenant interest in himself.

3. Communing with our own hearts, and recollecting former experiences of Gods gracious dealings with us, will kill those troubled thoughts which arise in our minds about our Spiritual and Eternal State. *Psal. 4. 4. Com-*

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mine with your own heart upon your Bed, and be still. When the Psalmist was in a troubled condition, and had many sad thoughts, as if God would cast him off for ever, and shew him no Mercy, he was quieted when he communed with his own heart, and recollected Gods gracious dealings with him in former days. *Psal. 77. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

4. Frequent communing with our own hearts, will discover our irregular walkings, and put us upon returning to God after we have gone astray; *Psal. 119. 59. I thought on my wayes, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies.* And turning to God, and walking in his ways, will preserve our peace, and maintain a Spirit of Adoption in us. *Jer. 3. 19. Thou shalt call me my Father, and shall not turn away.* If we would call God our Father, we must be careful we do not turn away from the Lord.

5. Get Scruples resolved.

6. See what are your most material doubts and scruples, which make you call in question your Interest in Christ, and beg of God to resolve those doubts, and remove those scruples, and observe what Resolution God gives you by his Word and Spirit, after you sought to him by Prayer. For after Prayer God is wont to give us intimation of our Interest in himself and his Son, and to give us boldness to claim our interest in him. *Zeck. 13. 9. They shall*

shall call and I will hear them, I will say, it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God. Such intimations of our Interest in God and Christ, and such encouragements to claim Interest in God as are given in after Prayer, are to be carefully observed and recorded safely, for they may be of great use to us; what was said in the fourth direction about the state of a Christian in this present evil world, may be of great use to the resolving scruples about our Interest in Christ. And also what is added after the use of Examination.

§. What to do when we can't get our doubts and scruples answered.

7. When your doubts and scruples, and darkness are of that nature, that you can't come to a Resolution about your interest in Christ, close a new with Jesus Christ. Seeing your selves under the offer of Christ in the gospel, say thus within your selves, though I can't make out that Christ is mine, I see God offers him freely to me, and therefore I will now accept of him that he may be mine; and I do and will in a solemn manner engage my self to him to be his. This will cut those knots in sunder which we can't untie. And a frequent renewal of our choice of Christ for our Lord and Saviour, our renewed acceptance of him upon the terms of the Gospel, with mature deliberation and judgment, and solemn surrendring our selves to Christ to be his, would.

would tend much to the clearing our interest. *Psal. 119. 30, 94. I have chosen the way of truth—I am thine. David* who had chosen God to be his God, and the ways of God to be the ways that he would walk in, could with an holy boldness say unto God, *I am thine, save me.*

S. An Holy Conversation is a means to preserve the Assurance of our Interest in Christ.

8. If we would retain the perswasion of our Interest in Christ, we must be careful to order our Conversations aright, and walk as becometh the Gospel of Christ, for an Holy Conversation is a special means to obtain the assurance of our Salvation. *Psal. 50. 23. To him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the Salvation of God. Isa. 32. 17. The work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the effect of Righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.* I might instance here in some particular branches of Righteousness, which tend to the breeding and preserving of an assurance of our being in a state of Grace and Salvation; as walking in Love, and being ready to do all offices of Love one for another. *1 Joh. 3. 18. 19. My little Children, let us not love in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.* This is the way, not only to get assurance, but to
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keep it to the end of our days, to shew our love in our diligence, in Miniistring to the Saints as we have ability, and as their necessity requireth. *Heb. 6. 10, 11.* Another Grace that will much further our Assurance, as trusting in God in all distresses and dangers, and living by Faith on Gods promises. *Psal. 31. 14. I trusted in thee, I said thou art my God.* The more we accustom our selves to trust in God, the more confidently we shall be enabled to call God our God. Another grace that will further our assurance is Uprightness; when we walk in our Integrity, that will scatter and dispel fears, and bring in comfort. *Psal. 112. 4. Unto the Upright there ariseth Light in Darknes.* But I shall add no more upon this question.

Sect. 3. What they should do, that can't make out their interest in Christ, in a time of trouble, and at the hour of Death.

Obj. It may be some will say, it is true, they that have an interest in Christ, and know it may be of good chear under all the troubles of this Life, and when they are to pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but what shall I do in an evil day, and at the hour of Death, that cannot to this day, nor ever could make it out that I have a saving interest in Christ.

§. Prayer

§. Prayer a means to clear interest. Encouragements to pray for this mercy.

A. 1. Pray to God to make clear, to your Souls, your interest in himself, and his Son Jesus Christ. *Psal. 35. 3. Say unto my Soul I am thy Salvation.* That which *David* asks is not, be thou my Salvation, but 'tis the satisfying his Soul with the knowledge that God was his Saviour, and would give him Salvation. *Say unto my Soul—* That is, Lord persuade my Soul, Lord give my Soul satisfaction in this great case, that thou art my Saviour, and wilt confer Salvation upon me. And what *David* prayed for in this kind, that may we pray for also. And for our encouragement to pray for the knowledge of your interest in Christ, consider these things.

1. Prayer is a means of Gods own appointing, not only for the obtaining of the favour of God, but also for the obtaining of the comfortable apprehensions of Gods love in Christ. *Job. 33. 26. He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy.* Here is a double blessing promised unto the man that prayeth unto God, he shall obtain the favour of God, and he shall see his face with joy, that is, he shall obtain the knowledge of Gods love to his Soul, which shall put great joy and gladness into his heart.

2. The knowledge of our interest in God

as our Father, and in Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, is promised in the new Covenant; and what the Lord hath promised, we may pray in Faith and Hope that we shall attain it. See promises to this purpose; *Isa. 60. 16. Thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer.* That which is here promised, is not, I will be thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, but the knowledge of our interest in Christ as our Saviour, and our Redeemer. It is not said, thou shalt know that I am the Saviour of *my people*, or the Saviour of *those that trust in me*, *Thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer.* Another promise of clearing our interest in Christ, we have, *Joh. 14. 20. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* At that day, what day is here meant? some understand it of the future life, when we shall live with Christ in Glory, spoken of in the foregoing verse, *because I live, ye shall live also, at that day ye shall know*— And doubtless the full accomplishment of this promise is the priviledge of the other life, to have a perfect understanding of the mystical Union, between the Father and the Son, and between Christ and Believers. But it hath also a respect to clearing our Union with Christ in this life; at that day, that is after I am risen from the dead, and gone to the Father, and at that day, that you set your love upon me, and keep my Commandments

ments, and I shall pray the Father, and he shall send you another comforter, even the Spirit of truth, he shall make it known to you, that I am in you, and you in me. It may also relate to *ver. 13, 14.* When you shall earnestly pray to the Father in my name, to have your union cleared, in that day you shall know that I am in you, and you in me. If any say, I have prayed to God to clear my Union with, and my Interest in Christ, and still I am in the dark about this matter. I answer, You must continue to seek this mercy, the knowledge of your interest in God and Christ, and that is the way to obtain it. *Hos. 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord—*

§. Such as can't make out their Interest in Christ, should close with Christ, that they may have an Interest in him.

2. If you cant, nor ever could make out your Interest in Christ, yea, suppose it be so that you have no interest in him, come in now, and close with him. The door of Hope still stands open to your Souls. It is yet an accepted time, and a day of Salvation. God still continueth to offer Christ to your Souls, and prays you to accept of him, *2 Cor. 5. 20. We pray you in Christs stead, be you reconciled to God.* If at length, after a long neglecting of Christ, you will come in, and close with him, you shall be saved by him. *Heb. 4. 7. To day, after so long a time, as it is said, to day if you will*

will bear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Those that had stood all the day idle, even to the last hour, were invited to go into the Vineyard, and going upon the invitation, had their reward. *Matth. 20. 6, 7, 9. And about the eleventh hour, he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle — Go ye also into the Vineyard, and whatever is right, that shall ye receive. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.*

This penny is by the generality of Interpreters agreed to be eternal life, and this eternal life shall be given to those that come into Christ at the last hour of the day, though the former part of their time hath been spent in idleness. But some may say, if a man hath reflected, and lived without God in the day of his prosperity, is there hope if such a man turn to God in the day of trouble, that God will be found of him, and be gracious unto him : I answer : There is hope for such as have neglected God along time, if they turn to him in the day of their trouble, that he will be gracious unto them.

2 Chron. 15. 3, 4. Now for a long season, Israel hath been without the true God — But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, he was found of them.

§. Such as want Evidence of their interest in Christ, ought to trust in him for Salvation. What grounds have such to trust in Christ ?

3. Though

3. Though you want evidence of your interest in Christ, in a time of trouble, and at the hour of Death; yet if you be such as live in the fear of God, such as desire to be saved by Christ in his own way, and upon his own Terms, you may, yea, you ought to trust in Christ for eternal Salvation. *Isa. 50. 10. Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servants, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* A man that truly feareth God, may be in great darkness about his Spiritual State, he may have no light, that is, no Evidence of his interest in God, and the promises; and so be in a very uncomfortable condition, yet such ought to trust in Christ.

If any say, what grounds hath a man that followeth after Righteousness, and desireth to live in the fear of God, and yet wanteth evidence of his Interest in Christ, and the promises of God, to trust in Christ for his Salvation?

S. Grounds of trusting in Christ for Salvation for such as are in a dark condition, as to their Interest in Christ.

A. 1. God sends his Son into the World, to take our nature upon him, and to die for our Sins for this very end and purpose, to seek and to save Sinners, who were in a lost, and undone condition. *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a*

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Luk. 19. 10. The Son of man is come to seek, and to save that which is lost. 1 John 4. 14. We have seen, and do testifie that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. John 3. 17. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. These general expressions to save the World, to save sinners, to save that which was lost, opens a door of hope to such as can't see their interest in Christ, but see themselves lost sinners, and hearing that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, to save lost sinners, it shews them that there is hope for their Souls, that they may obtain Salvation By Jesus Christ.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of the world, and who came into the world purposely to save sinners, is an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is able to save to the uttermost, that is to save perfectly, to save eternally, to give all things requisite to Salvation, he is able to justify, sanctifie, and bring unto glory all that come unto him. For his blood is available to take away the greatest sins of the greatest sinners in the whole world.

John

John 1. 29. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And his Spirit is able to sanctifie the worst and most polluted Sinners. The Corinthians were the chief of Sinners, Extortioners, Drunkards, Adulterers, Abusers of themselves with mankind, with other abominations; yet they were sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, of great sinners made eminent Saints. 1 Cor. 6. 2. 10, 11.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ inviteth, and calleth all distressed Persons in all places, that see themselves in a perishing undone condition, to look to him, and to come to him for Salvation. *Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of Earth.* That is, let all Persons from one end of the Earth to the other, that find a want of Salvation, look unto me, and I will save them. *Matth. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

4. The Lord commandeth us to trust in his Son for the giving us eternal life. *1 John 3. 23. This is his Commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us Commandment.* And he is displeased with those that do not relie on him for their Salvation. *Pf. 78. 21, 22. The Lord was wroth — and anger came up against Israel, because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his Salvation.*

5. We have Gods promises, yea, many promises, that he will give eternal life, and blessed-

bleffedness to all, whoſoever they be that believe and truſt in his Son, *Pſ. 2. 12. Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him. Joh. 3. 16. God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Joh. 6. 47. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, hath everlaſting life.*

§. The plea of ſuch as can't truſt in Chriſt for Salvation, for want of Sanctification.

Obj. 1. None ſhall be ſaved by Chriſt, but ſuch as are ſanctified, and in a ſtate of Grace, but I want evidences of my being ſanctified, and being in a ſtate of Grace, how then can I truſt in Chriſt to ſave me?

A. 1. It is true, that Chriſt ſanctifieth all whom he ſaveth, for without Holineſs, no man whatſoever ſhall ſee the Lord. *Heb. 12. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which, no man ſhall ſee the Lord.* If a man live and dye in his ſins without repentance, and yet truſt in Chriſt for Salvation, he doth but delude himſelf; for our Lord Jeſus telleth us expreſly, that all that do not repent, ſhall ſurely periſh. *Luk. 13. 3. I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.*

2. Though you want evidences of your Sancti-

Sanctification, yet, do you not find ardent desires of Sanctification; do you not find hungers and thirstings after Righteousness? Such as hunger and thirst after Righteousness, are in a blessed condition, as well as they that have attained Righteousness. *Matth. 5. 6. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Spiritual desires are an argument of the Grace of God bestowed upon us. The gracious estate of the Servants of God is sometimes set out by their desires. *Isa. 26. 8. The desire of our Souls is to thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. Neh. 1. 11. Thy Servants who desire to fear thy name*—Then our desires argue a gracious state, when our desires of God, and the things of God exceed our desires of other things. *Pf. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee.*

3. If you find in your self a want of Sanctification, know this, that you are to trust in Christ for Sanctification, as well as Salvation. *1 Cor. 1. 30. Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Sanctification.* Now if Christ be made of God unto us Sanctification, then we may, we ought to trust in Christ for Sanctification, as well as other Blessings:

Use last. Learn hence, that they which have gotten their interest in Christ cleared to their Souls,

Souls need not to be afraid of death, but may depart in peace : A confirmation hereof we have in the example of this our deceased Sister, Mrs. *Ellen Asty*, who was a Mother in *Israel* ; who was so much above the fear of Death, that when I was with her, a few days before she dyed, she used these expressions. *I can chearfully embrace death, I should not be afraid of death, if I should see him coming in at the Windows, if I should see him come into my Chamber, for my beloved is mine, and I am his, and therefore she knew he would not condemn her.* And having found abundance of comfort in her interest in Christ, she was desirous that this Text might be Preached on at her Funeral, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, (I suppose) that others might be stirred up to get an interest in Christ, and to get their interest made out. Several things have been observed, wherein she may be exemplary to others, as may be seen in the account of her life, which followeth.

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THE
L I F E

O F

Mrs. *Ellen Afty*;

T H E

Late Wife of Mr. *Afty* of
Stratford in Suffolk, De-
ceased.

Revel. 14. 13.

Blessed are the Dead that dye in the Lord.



Printed by J. R. 1681.

THE LIFE

OF

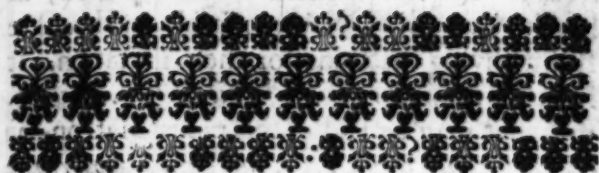
Mrs. Ellen Ayscough

THE

Wife of Mr. Ayscough of
Stratford in Suffolk De-
ceased.

By John Ayscough Esq.
Son of the said Mrs. Ayscough in the Last

Printed by J. B. 1881



THE
L I F E

OF

Mrs. *Ellen Asty*,

THE

Wife of Mr. *Asty*, late
Minister of the Gospel
in *Essex*.

IT is exceedingly pleasant unto many, to be beholding the Pictures of their dearest Friends, when their persons are removed out of their sight, and laid in the silent dust, and it hath been found more than a little profitable unto surviving Friends, to be reading over the lives

2 The Life of Mrs. Ellen Alty.

lives of the most eminent Saints departed, as hereby being dead, they yet speak, and become still as living patterns for their imitation. It is said, *The memory of the just is Blessed. Prov. 10. 7.* And it may be said of this pious Matron, as of *Demetrius. 3 Job. 1. 12. She hath a good report of all men, and of the truth it self.* As to her Birth and Education, much might be spoken. She was the Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bently, her Father an eminent Godly Minister, her Mother a very Gracious, Holy Gentlewoman, who lived at *Plumsted in Norfolk*, who brought her up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. She remembered her Creator in the days of her youth, and chose him to be hers betimes. The Lord was pleased to begin a work of Grace so early upon her heart, and ripen it so fast, that whilst she was young, and Nature not grown to its perfection, she was a well grown Christian in gracious experiences, excelling many who set out for Jesus Christ long before her: that she became a pattern of piety to others: yea, the whole Family where she lived, before she entred into a married estate, and many out of it, (even such as occasionally came into it) were much the better for her, and Blessed God that they had acquaintance with her, valuing her Grace and Judgment in the deep matters of the Gospel. She was the wife of Mr. Alty, a laborious Minister of the Gospel, whom God made much use of in the Conversion of many sinners, and building up others in Grace and Holiness, who

The Life of Mrs. Ellen Aftly. 3

who were already brought home to Jesus Christ. When she was first married, several Gentlewomen sent their Daughters to be with her, that they might live under her instructions, and the Lord made her very useful to them.

She was eminent for her deportment, and carriage in all Relations : some who had intimate acquaintance with her, do testify, that she was dutiful to her Parents, an obedient and loving Wife to her Husband, a tender hearted Mother to her Children, (one said) never did any bear the Souls of her Children, and Childrens Children, more upon their hearts than she did ; never was any more concerned for their Souls, nor did more Travel in Birth, than she, till she could see that in Christ they were born again ; never any more concerned for the Souls of those committed to her charge (though but servants,) than she was.

Some Ministers, and others who knew her Conversation, testify of her gracious carriage and behaviour, in her various conditions, in the course of her Life, as followeth.

She was *very knowing in the things of Jesus Christ*, and her knowledge was experimental, growing, humbling, and practical, a well grounded Professor, and an honour and glory to her Profession.

K

She

4 *The Life of Mrs. Ellen Asty.*

✓ She had a sound Judgment, a well enlightened understanding, in the mystery of godliness.

✓ She had the Scriptures (the Fountain of saving knowledge) in very high estimation, and daily to the last, diligently searched into them, not one day passed but she read, or had read to her, some portions of them, which she made matter of meditation, and when her weaknesses were so great, and her eyes so fail'd in the latter part of her life, that she could not read her self, she called one to read to her, weighed all her actions by the Scriptures as her Rule, considered her warrant, call and command from God, for all she did, and acted in all, in obedience thereunto.

○ She would often be telling others, how in their way they might serve the Lord, though the work of their place was never so mean and low, if they did consider the precepts and rules, which God had given referring to such a Relation, place, employ, or condition wherein they stood, and acted in obedience to his will therein.

✕ She outwent most Christians in *her strictness on the Lords day*, the whole time was spent in publick and private exercises, and would allow nothing that was secular and aliene to Religion to be done in her Family, that was not of indis-

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penſible neceſſity on that day, and always had a more than ordinary preparation in her houſe the day before, that thoſe in her family might have no temptation in that reſpect, to violate any part of the ſacred time of that day.

She was very exact as to her words, and diſcourſes on that day, not opening her Lips to ſpeak any thing that was not ſuitable and agreeable to the holineſs of that day, and it was a great burthen and affliction to her Spirit, which ſhe could not bear, but mourned under, to hear others give their tongues a liberty to ſpeak any thing unſuitable and heterogeneous to the day, ſhe did *highly prize all the ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt, they were ſweeter to her than the honey, or the honey Comb*; more deſirable than her appointed food, never ſo much in her element as when waiting upon the Lord, either in publick or private opportunities, and to the laſt would venture through all difficulties, and bear up under great weakneſſes, in duties of Chriſtian Communion, and could not live without them; her love to them and delight in them, was as ſtrong and freſh in her old age, as in the day of her Eſpouſals, when ſhe firſt ſet out, and began to taſt that the Lord was gracious. It is not to be ſpoken how ſhe hazarded her weak body to hear Sermons, to attend upon the Lord in all opportunities enjoyable. It was generally obſerved in *Stratford*, that ſhe was ſick indeed, if ſhe was not at the

6 *The Life of Mrs. Ellen Afty.*

word ; either on the Lords day, or at Church meetings on the week day. Nothing but a very afflictive hand of God kept her at home. It was her daily study how to glorifie God in every condition, and under every dispensation, that was either prosperous or adverse, that was principally her study, how and in what way God might be most honoured, and his name advanced by her.

She had a heart for *Universal Obedience*, walking as *Elizabeth* in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord, blameless. She evidenced that she was a friend to Jesus Christ by doing whatever he commanded her, and through that friendship between Christ and her, she found she could do nothing so well as the will of Christ, and found that obedience easie ; loved Jesus Christ with a superlative love, and served him not with half an a heart, but sincerely with the whole heart, yea delighted in serving of him, she had a Law within, suitable to the Law without, which rendred it natural to her, to act graciously ; Jesus Christ was her Life, his Grace and Image were implanted in her Soul, that from a Spirit of love to him, even in old age, when weak and sickly, she acted for Christ yea above her strength, he was in her so much by his Spirit, that she thought nothing too much to do for him and his. She was full of good projects and designs for Jesus Christ, loved to visit the sick and

The Life of Mrs. Ellen Afty. 7

and afflicted, and those who walked in darkness, as to their spiritual conditions, loved to acquaint themselves with her ; who by a great treasure of experiences, was able to afford Counsell, and comfort to them. A Christian able to speak a word in season, to the relief of any soul under spiritual burdens and pressures ; And as ready to impart what Jesus Christ had Communicated unto her, and the Lord Communicated the more to her, because she was so free to Communicate to others, laying up her experiences as for her own good, so for others, that they might be comforted with the same comforts, that she was comforted withall. Her discourse never tended to self applause or commendation, neither was it burdensome, frothy or unsuitable, but always favourable Christian and profitable, commanding the ears of all about her ; In her Family she was frequently taking opportunities in the day time and evening, and when ever she thought it seasonable, to be speaking of the things of God of the excellency of Jesus Christ ; of the way of Life by him ; opening the miserable condition of a soul out of Jesus Christ, setting forth the evil of sin, the immortality of the Soul, the sufferings and eternity of the punishment of Hell, to her Children, Servants, and those that lived with her, and was daily dropping in and working upon them, to make them serious and considerate, and as God had given her a choice gift that way, so he made a great use

use thereof; her counsels, warnings, threatenings, invitations, and holy instructions were made singularly advantageous and useful, to the convincing, quickning and edifying those committed to her charge, so as they had cause for ever to bless God for the gracious words which proceeded out of her mouth.

✓ She was always taking of opportunities, to be calling upon those in a natural estate, to mind the great concerns of their Souls, and to be exciting, provoking, encouraging and strengthening those, whose face was Zion ward, her words were as choice Silver, seasoned with Grace, mostly Scriptural.

The *Sermons that she heard* on the Lords day, or Week day, were much the Subject matter of her discourse.

✓ The Light of Gospel Grace and Truth did so shine in her, as that her presence laid a restraint upon Sinners, it was a curb unto vain Persons, if they came into the Room where she was present.

She was exact, and much in private Duties every day, and yet so prudent in the singling out of the time, as that the place in the Family wherein she stood, , never missed her. She had at all times a due respect to the duties of both Tables; and both in her Life and

and Discourses, shewed how inseparable they were, commending to all persons with whom she had to do, the necessary and indispensible observation of both: She looked upon time as a precious thing that was not to run waste, and was diligent in the improvement of the Sands of every hour, so as there was no part of her Life from Morning unto Evening, that was an empty space; but was laid out *either in doing, or receiving good.* Like the Summer she brought forth every thing in its season, wisely forecasting, and timeing whatsoever she had the ordering of.

She studied to excel in faithfulness and uprightness in all she undertook, like *Nabhiel* she was without allowed guile, had the Testimony of her Conscience, that in simplicity, and Godly sincerity, she had her Conversation in the World; very zealous for the truth of Jesus Christ, following the Lamb whithersoever he went.

She had a *very publick Spirit*, minding the good of others where she lived; much taken up about the welfare of the Nation, and was deeply concerned for the interest of Christ all the world over, daily bore Zion, and the work that God was doing in the world upon her heart, and laid out her self much in Prayer for those things.

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She

10 *The Life of Mrs. Ellen Asty.*

✓ She had a large heart for *Jesus Christ*, and for all that were his, though of differing persuasions, always putting the best construction upon every thing but sin, was no way censorious, or ready harshly to judge others, but did most fairly construe their actions and carriages, speaking modestly, and moderately of them, Gospel Charity ruling her Spirit in all, wonderful affable, and courteous, so as the Grace and sweetness in her words and carriage, did win upon all that she conversed with, that they loved her, and said that she was made up of love.

✕ She by Grace was enabled to Regulate her affections; had a choice poise continually upon her Spirit, that she seldom or never roiled or was disturbed, but walked in an even and composed frame, though none more sympathizing, loving tender and affectionate than she, yet were her affections always in order, and under command, free from excessive and disturbing passions, that do often put the strings of the Spirits of most men and women out of tune; and so render them unfit for what they are called too, in the place wherein the Lord hath set them.

✓ She had a fresh remembrance of the means, and methods of the Lords dealing with her in bringing her Soul unto him, and of her many experiences she had of his grace and love towards her. She

The Life of Mrs. Ellen Asty. II

She lived much in Communion with God, there was an unspeakable intercourse between God and her Soul every day. She would do nothing till she had spread it before the Lord, and knew his mind, and in things not only small but weighty ; She had such intimations from the Lord of his will, and his secret was so with her, as she before hand knew the mind of God, because God had told hereby his Spirit, for she gave not over till he had signified by his Spirit upon her Spirit, what was his pleasure, what he would do, or what he would have done, and God did marvelously herein condescend to her, not once, but frequently, or from time to time ; she was far from Euthusiastme, but had such intimacy with the Lord, that she went daily to him for some word, some manifestation of himself to bear up her Spirit that day, and he gave in either a word of promise, or let out something of his attributes to her, discovered of his Wisdom, Power, Faithfulness, Allsufficiency, Unchangeableness, and the like, wherewith her inward man was fed and strengthened, and when her Family concerns were more, she arose the earlier, and though attended with the greatest weakness, yet always began the day with God, and would not omit the seasons for private Communion with the Lord, neither indeed could she live without them, they being the life of her Spirit.

She

12 *The Life of Mrs. Ellen Asty.*

She lived in an eminent exercise of many graces of the Spirit. She was well instructed in the mystery of the life of Faith, lived in a daily dependance upon God for all, in her greatest fulness she lived not upon the creature but upon God, and recieved all from him in the way of Faith and Prayer, in every strait she had recourse to the Al-sufficiency of God, and would often say, *the creature runs into emptiness, and the streams they dried up, but the Fountain was ever full and flowing*, and in all losses and changes blessed her self in God her portion, who was a faithful Covenant, keeping God for ever ; she went to the Wisdom of God to be directed, and waited there for Counsel every day, her Faith advanced into assurance of the love of God which she enjoyed most part of her days, and thence issued spiritual and unmixed comforts : as she walked circumspectly being careful not to provoke the Lord, so he witnessed his love to her, and filled her Soul with strong Consolation, that she had a Heaven out of it's place, even here-upon Earth, she was in the Banqueting house of Jesus Christ, in his Wine Cellar, where his Banner over her was Love. In a Letter of her own she said ; I have not only heard that God is good, but I have had many experiences of his Love and Faithfulness to me in all my streights, and Widdow-hood condition : I may say the Life of Faith is the sweetest Life in the World, as it is a Life that bringeth much

much glory to God, so much comfort to ourselves.

How full of Love she was to Jesus Christ is already manifested in her carefulness to keep his Commandments, and also in her love to the Members of Christ, both that and also her Humility, and self-denyal appeared in that, in her highest aſtings and beſt frame ſhe diſowned her ſelf, and leaned only upon Jeſus Chriſt, truſted only in him, gloried in nothing but in Chriſt, in the Croſs of Chriſt, in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, in the Love of Chriſt: not in what ſhe did for Chriſt, though ſhe did much, and delighted in ſo doing, but ſhe gloried in the Grace of Chriſt that did much for her, he and his Righteouſneſs were all her life and comfort, ſhe had an eye upon the Incenſe, the merits and interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt in all her approaches to God, being aſhamed of the mixture of ſin, thoſe weakneſſes and imperfections that were in her beſt performances; notwithstanding all her ſtrictneſs and exactneſs, ſhe lay as low before the Lord in the ſenſe of her own vileness, emptineſs, nothingneſs, as if there were nothing in her.

She was much in exalting of Jeſus Chriſt, his merits and grace, admiring what he had done for ſinners, touching their reconciliation to God, the remiſſion of ſin, their ſtanding and priviledges in grace here, and the glory that is
to

14 *The Life of Mrs. Ellen Afty.*

to be revealed, relying on the freeness and fulness of his grace alone, as if she had done or were able to do nothing, she did set the Crown on his head in all, always saw that in her self which kept her low and humble before the Lord, and nothing in her own eyes.

She excelled in, and was a pattern of *Patience* under all her troubles, her afflictions were many and long, often at the very mouth of the Grave, in the latter part of her time seldom enjoyed a well day, yet never murmured; thought her afflictions small, bore them with a chearful Spirit; was always submissive to the will of God, always thought and spoke well of God, and justified him in all her Tryals.

She was wonderfully melted into the will of God, and lived always out of her own will resigned up to God, to be disposed of as he pleased, and was greatly satisfied in what he chose for her, she hath said, the will of God is sweet to her in every condition, and under much bodily weakness, *if the Lord would have her live to be sick she was content*, yet latterward was mostly tryed in the Fire of affliction, when her Husband laid down his living upon the account of Non-conformity in stead of ~~repining~~, she said she was glad they had such a house, and accommodations to leave for Christ, and with all freeness and readiness resigned up all to him. She was sorely tryed in the loss of her dearest Relations

Relations and choicest comforts in this World, but she was prepared to be any thing that God would have her be, and that with all alacrity and cheerfulness of Spirit.

She had a lively hope of future mercy; of the life to come: shee said she scarce knew how to live out of Heaven, from Jesus Christ always groaning in the body, to be delivered from the body of sin and death, and to be with Jesus. As she set out at first, so she continued in the vigorous and constant exercise of all grace, not loosing the life, nor abating or impairing the strength thereof in old age, under the decays of nature, but in the 73 of her age, she slept or dyed in Jesus, and her Soul was gathered to the Spirits of just men made perfect:

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